

HISLOP COLLEGE CHAPEL

A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE

*Christian Prayers and Addresses
for Non-Christian Students*

BY

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THE CENTRAL BOARD OF
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‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ *St. Luke 11: 1.*

‘Grant, O Lord, to all teachers and students, to know that which is worth knowing, to love that which is worth loving and to dislike whatsoever is evil in Thine eyes. Grant us with true judgment to distinguish things that differ, and above all to search out and to do what is well-pleasing unto Thee.’
—*Thomas à Kempis.*

‘To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.’

—*Archbishop Temple.*

PREFACE

The title of this little book has been taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 56, verse 7, 'Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people'. I have chosen the words as the title of the book because they express the purpose of the addresses and prayers contained in it. They have been written for use in the services conducted in our College Chapel. The great majority of those who attend such services are not Christians. To enable them to feel at home in such services we sing Indian *bhajans* to the accompaniment of Indian instruments of music, and we use prayer mats instead of chairs and kneelers. The fact that the worshippers are mostly non-Christians is also reflected in the addresses and prayers that are used. That is why, for instance, I have quoted from religious literature that is regarded as part of 'the heritage of India'. Moreover Christian doctrine enters largely into the prayers of Christian congregations, and words are used which are familiar and intelligible to Christians, who have been trained in Christian worship. But non-Christians would find it difficult to understand them. I have therefore avoided the use of expressions that can only be understood by those who have had personal experience of the Church's tradition. I trust that the addresses and prayers contained in this book are fitted to help non-Christians to enter into the variety and depth of our Christian worship and to enrich their personal religious experience.

I need not say that I have made use of other books of prayers. I have, of course, quoted from the Book of Common Prayer. I have been helped by the Prayer Book, *New Every*

Morning, published by the B.B.C. and by the *Book of Prayers for Students* published by the S.C.M. I have also quoted freely from the Church Hymnary.

My thanks are due to the Visva-Bharati Publishing Department and Messrs. Macmillan for permission to quote from the late Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* and *Fruit Gathering*; to the Association Press and Dr. A. J. Appasamy for permission to quote from his *Temple Bells*; to the Association Press for permission to quote from Winslow's *Life of N. V. Tilak*; and to the Christian Literature Society of India for permission to quote from *The Poems of Tukaram*.

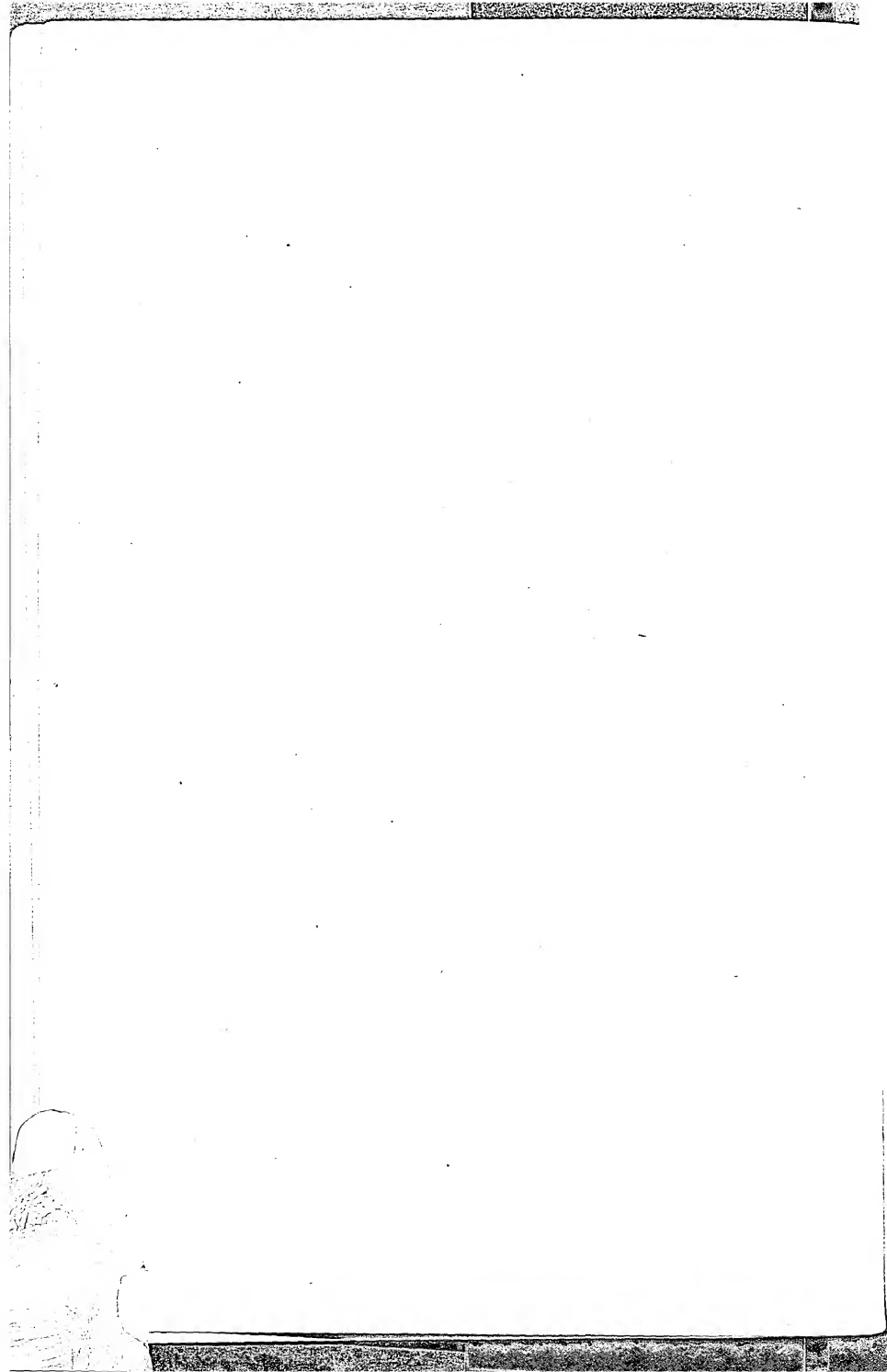
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I

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

WHAT IS HIS NAME?

Who shall tell me
By what name to call Him,
Where to find Him?

Bengali Hymn

And Moses said unto God, when the children of Israel shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am (*Exodus 3: 13-14*).

That is the greatest of all questions, what is the name to give to God? Men everywhere have a vague knowledge that God exists. But that is not enough for them. They want to know the character of God. To know His name would be to have knowledge of God that is definite. That is what men long for, that is why their most eager question is, by what name shall we call Him, what is His name?

By the use of their own minds men know that God must be Almighty and Eternal and Supreme. But they want to know more about God than that. Is God a person? Does He feel for us as we feel for one another? Is there a Supreme Will that controls all things and intends good for mankind? Is there a personal relationship between God and us? That is the meaning of man's question, what is His name? A person always has a name. He can tell other people what his name is.

2 'A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE'

The only way we can find out what God's name is, is when He tells it to us. That is revelation. He told it to Moses. It was a strange name: 'I am.' But it was a personal name. Because man can say 'I am', he is a person and, when God declares that His name is 'I am', it means that He is a person too. That is the most comforting thing that man can hear, that God is not impersonal, but personal, knowable, helpful and loving as all good persons are.

Paul, the Apostle of Christ, said to the people of Athens, 'As I passed by and saw the objects of your worship I found an altar with this inscription, To an unknown God, What therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you' (*Acts 17: 23*).

Jesus said, 'After this manner therefore pray ye', 'Our Father which art in Heaven' (*Matthew 6: 9*). 'Heavenly Father,' that is the name God has told us to use when we pray.

'LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER'

Blessèd be Thy glorious name, O God:

That Thou hast created us in Thine own image,
that Thou mightest speak to us;
That Thou hast made us for Thyself,
that we might speak to Thee;
That Thy living word addressed to us
has wakened us into being as persons.

Blessèd be Thy glorious name:

That Thou hast broken through the silence of eternity and spoken unto us;
That Thou in Thy mércy hast made known what is hidden from us, Thy nature and Thy name;

That in the midst of darkness 'Thou hast shed
abroad the light of the knowledge of Thee.

Blessèd be Thy glorious name:

That Thou dost meet us in all the tenderness and
strength of a Person,

That Thou, the Eternal Person, dost call us into a
personal fellowship with Thyself,

That Thou hast made Thyself known as Creative
Personality, our Heavenly Father.

Blessèd be Thy glorious name.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, we thank Thee for
Thy name revealed unto us; help us to understand its
sacred meaning. We worship Thee as the Heavenly
Father of all men. Thou art the Perfect Father. All
the sympathy and care of human fatherhood are but
reflections of Thy eternal care for us. All that makes
the name Father a beloved name to us is in Thee in all
fulness. No earthly father loves like Thee, so faith-
fully, so wisely or with so fervent a desire that we may
be what Thou wouldst have us be.

O Heavenly Father, by the power of Thy love and
guidance make us Thy true and loving children.

May we prize Thy love and be proud of it. May we
do Thy will and find our greatest joy in doing it.

'Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing every blessing
If our God our Father be.'

To God the Father, who loveth us, be all love and
glory, for time and for eternity. AMEN.

GOD ABOVE US

Look at the second window of the Chapel. You see that it represents a circle and in the circle is set a triangle. What does that mean? The circle is put there to make us think of the perfection, the completeness, the unbroken self-sufficiency of God. And what does the triangle mean? It means that God's full orb'd perfection is manifested to us in a threefold revelation; three great truths concerning God have been communicated to us, so that we have to think of the fullness of God's nature as having three sides to it as it were. St. Paul says this of God: 'One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all' (*Ephesians* 4: 6). To-day we will think of God as 'over all', God above us, the greatness and majesty of God, God as Creator and Lord. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' (*Genesis* 1: 1).

'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.' (The first words of the Christian Creed.)

What does it mean to believe in God as the Creator of the Universe? That belief is not essential to religious faith because it explains how this mysterious universe came into existence. Its importance lies in the fact that it asserts in the most emphatic way the greatness of God. He is the Creator of all. Therefore He is above all and over all things. An artist is greater than any work of art that he creates. A great painter was once asked which was the most beautiful picture he had painted. He replied, 'The next one'. His genius had not been exhausted in what he had produced. He was greater than all the work he had done. Similarly God is greater than all the wonder of His created

Universe. In Him there are infinite creative resources.

He cannot be identified with the Universe because He is its Creator. He cannot be limited or frustrated by its laws for it was He who fashioned them. God is greater than the world, 'of an infinite majesty'.

'Many there are that praise and glorify the garden and few that wish to see the owner and master of the garden. But I say unto you, Is the garden greater than its Lord and Master?' (*Ramakrishna Paramahansa*).

How beautiful are earth and sky and sea! But 'the beauty of the Lord our God' captivates the soul beyond all these. What mighty forces there are in the universe! How terrifying they are! But above them all 'The Lord reigneth. Therefore let the earth rejoice' (*Psalm 97: 1*).

'They were all astonished at the majesty of God' (*Luke 9: 43, R.V.*)

Let us pray

Glory be to God on high. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, Thou only art Holy, Thou only art the Lord.

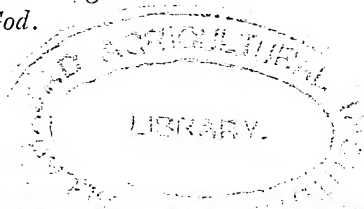
Let us meditate on the greatness and majesty of God. After each meditation we shall say together 'Glory be to Thee, O God', and thereafter there will be a brief silence.

O God, Thou art from everlasting to everlasting the same.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

All things suffer change, 'but naught changest Thee'.

Glory be to Thee, O God.



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Before Thee all created things are but as dust.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

Thy Being, O God, is boundless.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

All things are subject to Thee, but Thou art subject to none.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

All things depend on Thee, but Thou art dependent on naught but Thyself.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

Thou includest all within Thyself and yet Thou art greater than all.

Glory be to Thee, O God.

'O Lord, Our God, Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? (*Psalms* 8: 1, 4).

'Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name' (*Matthew* 6: 9).

O God, Creator and Father, We praise Thee for the world in which Thou hast set our lives; for Thy goodness, new every morning, for the life-giving power of Thy holiness. Make us, O God, worthy of Thy many gifts. May we learn to look with pure and reverent eyes upon all Thy creation, and glorify Thee daily in our bodies and our spirits which are Thine.

'My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright! . . .

O how I fear Thee, Living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,

Yet I may love Thee too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art,
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.'

Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible,
the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

AMEN.

GOD WITH US

God is transcendent. He dwells in a sphere beyond our sorrow and our weakness. He is the high and holy one. That is a great uplifting truth. But it is an obvious truth. If God is not above us and beyond us He is not God at all. That truth by itself is not enough to meet the needs of man's soul. We know that God is far beyond us, that He is exalted above us in majesty. But what we want to know beyond everything else is that the Transcendent God is not so remote as to be indifferent, not so exalted as to be heedless of His creatures. It would be wonderful to be certain of that. That would be the most precious truth of all, to know that God cares for the least and lowliest of His children. But we cannot realize how wonderful and how precious that truth is, unless there is always before us the thought of God's unspeakable greatness. The love and care of God for man are revealed in all their wonder against the background of God's infinite majesty. Man's most profound and joyful gratitude is aroused by the truth that God, though He is enthroned above all, yet cares for all and dwells in the midst of His children.

Listen to this passage from Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*:

'Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee.

'He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and His garment is covered with dust.

'Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our Master Himself has joyfully taken upon Him the bonds of creation; He is bound with us all for ever.'

That is a beautiful expression of the poet's faith that God, though of course He is above us in majesty, is also so near to us that there can be no separation from Him. 'He is bound with us all for ever.'

This is the truth that is central in the Christian Gospel. This is what makes it good news, that though the High and Holy One inhabiteth eternity He dwells with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit. The proof of it is that 'The Word (God's creative purpose) became flesh, (in the person of Jesus) and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth' (*John* 1: 14). The presence of God among His children is a gracious reality. We do not deserve such love at His hand, but He offers it to us all the same. That is the wonderful thing. We are unworthy that He should come into our midst, but 'He has joyfully taken upon Him the bonds of creation'. On one occasion Jesus was teaching that a man's eternal destiny is determined by the lowly service he renders to his fellowmen. He said that all such service is really done to Him 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me' (*Matthew* 25: 40). 'He is bound with us all for ever'.

Let us pray

*Let us dwell upon this wonderful thought
till we realize how precious it is.*

Almighty God, Thy greatness cannot be compared
with any other greatness.

As the heavens are higher than the earth so are Thy
thoughts higher than our thoughts.

Unto Thee do we lift up our eyes, O Thou that
sittest in the Heavens.

That though Thou art so great and holy, Thy fatherly
presence is ever about us,

We thank our God.

That Thou art so great that Thou carest for each
one of us,

We thank our God.

That Thou art not far from us but near at hand,

We thank our God.

That Thou dost understand us better than we
understand ourselves,

We thank our God.

That though we do not deserve it, Thou dost offer
us the gift of Thy love,

We thank our God.

That in all the afflictions of Thy people Thou Thy-
self art afflicted,

We thank our God.

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That Thy mercy and grace are the great reality,
We thank our God.

Heavenly Father, may we rejoice in Thy love,
 may we be saved by Thy mercy,
 may we be renewed by Thy grace,
Behold what marvellous love the Father hath bestowed on us—that we should be called God's children.
Help us, O God, to realize how marvellous it is.

'Thou dwellest in unshadowed light,
All sin and shame above—
That Thou shouldst bear our sin and shame,
How can I tell such love'?
(Narayan Waman Tilak)

Keep yourselves in the love of God and may His peace that passeth all understanding guard your hearts and minds. AMEN.

GOD WITHIN US

God is not only above us and among us, He is also within us. He is not only exalted in heaven and near to us on earth, He is also in our hearts enlightening and purifying our lives. Our knowledge of God is not complete till we feel His presence within us quickening us into life, and shedding abroad in us His peace and comfort. We are often aware of an active force within us rousing us or quietening us. We are not always able to understand what is taking place within us. Many a time we do not realize that God is making His presence felt within us. Rabindranath Tagore in one of his poems has written, 'I know not what this is that stirs in me,—I know not its meaning'. There is something mysterious about our inner life, and we do not always connect what

takes place within us with its true cause. As Jesus said, 'the wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth' (*John* 3: 8). There is nothing so strange and wonderful as the movement of the wind, and often our spiritual experience is as difficult to understand. Once we awaken to the fact that God is within us drawing us to Himself and shaping our characters, it becomes for us a transforming experience. Jesus said that it meant being 'born of the Spirit', a rebirth, a gift of new life. The meaning of that word 'Spirit' that Jesus used is just the Presence of God in man's soul. Sometimes it is spoken of as 'the Holy Spirit' and it always means the Divine life within man's soul, the Presence of God in the heart. That is very vividly explained by a striking phrase used by St. Paul, 'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you' (*1 Corinthians* 3: 16). Human life a habitation of God in the Spirit! That is a wonderful thought. But it is a favourite thought of all who have felt the power of God in their lives. A Tamil poet of long ago wrote this:

'I cannot say, I will compel Him to dwell in me,
He Himself comes, with yearning for me,
And dwells in my body and mingles with my life,
Is it possible for Him now to leave me?'

God, the self-invited guest within us, Who seeks an entrance into our hearts because He loves us, that is the beautiful thought of the poet. Jesus is pictured in these striking words as a Divine Guest claiming entry into our hearts, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him' (*Revelation* 3: 20).

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God's presence within us always means that Truth makes its demand upon us and calls us to decision. God within us is the Spirit of Truth, and Truth is an active force that claims our loyalty.

'Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny;
Yea with one voice O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.'

But God's presence within us is the sure source of comfort and peace. Jesus called the Holy Spirit 'the Comforter', and when He promised that the Spirit within them would be to His disciples what He had been to them, He said 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you' (*John* 14: 27). God desires to dwell within us. May we realize who it is who would be our guest. May we welcome Him within. Our lives may not be beautiful sublime temples fit for His indwelling. But surely they may become happy well-ordered homes in which He will be glad to dwell.

Let us pray

O God within, give us grace to know that it is Thy Spirit that so disturbs and so soothes our souls. May we hearken to Thy commands and gladly obey them. May we listen to Thy voice offering us the gift of peace and comfort, and may we joyfully receive it. Thus may our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace.

St. Augustine became a great saint and this is one of his prayers:

'The house of my soul is, I confess, too narrow for Thee, do Thou enlarge it, that Thou mayest enter in;

it is ruinous, do Thou repair it. It has that within which must offend Thine eyes; I confess and know it; but whose help shall I implore in cleansing it, but Thine alone?’

We all have to pray the same prayer that God may enlarge, repair and beautify our lives that they may be more fitting dwelling places of the Holy Spirit.

‘I dared not hope that Thou wouldst deign to come
And make this lowly heart of mine Thy home,
That Thou wouldst deign, O King of kings, to be,
E’en for one hour a sojourner in me,
Yet art Thou always here to help, and bless,
And lift the load of my great sinfulness.’

O God, who art the light of the minds who know Thee, the life of the souls that love Thee and the strength of the thoughts that seek Thee, help us so to know Thee that we may truly love Thee, so to love Thee that we may fully serve Thee, whose service is perfect freedom.

Let us meditate for a few moments on this beautiful prayer.

‘GOD, THE LIGHT, LIFE AND STRENGTH OF OUR SOULS’

May the light of life shine within us,
May we receive the gift of abundant life,
And may we be strengthened by His spirit in the
inner man.

‘THAT WE MAY TRULY LOVE HIM’

How great that love of ours should be remembering as we do, that the secret of our love to Him is not that we loved Him, but that He first loved us!

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'THAT WE MAY FULLY SERVE HIM'

How whole-hearted should our service of Him be seeing He calls for service rendered not in the spirit of a slave, who knoweth not his master's will, but in the spirit of a friend who would do all he can for one he loves!

'THAT WE MAY TRULY LOVE HIM'

'THAT WE MAY FULLY SERVE HIM'

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory throughout all ages, world without end.

AMEN.

16 'A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE'

stupid thing in life, leave God out of account, and it makes him do the wickedest thing, set himself up against God's control of his life. St. Paul describes irreligious people in this way, 'Knowing God they glorified Him not as God neither gave thanks; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (*Romans* 1: 21). In another part of the Bible it is said, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (*Proverbs* 1: 7), and again it is written, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble' (*James* 4: 6).

Humility is the fundamental religious virtue, as pride is the source of all irreligion. All men who have had a deep sense of God teach that truth. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said: 'Dost thou wish, disciple, to find in the Lord thy sole companion and rest? Then be thou humbler than the humblest, lowlier than the lowliest, yea, less than the least'. Once when Jesus' disciples asked Him who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, it is said, that He called to Him a little child, and said unto them, 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven' (*Matt.* 18: 4), and several times He said this arresting word, 'Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted' (*Luke* 14: 11). The secret of wisdom is to acknowledge our human limitations, not to try and transcend them. The secret of greatness is to acknowledge God who is greater than we are. Humility is not servility nor is it humiliation. It is a straightforward admission that we are more dependent than in our pride we think we are. To learn the lessons of a wise dependence is the surest way to build up strength. 'Humility,' it has been said 'is the throne of God in the heart of man'. Let us approach that throne with a manly fear.

Let us pray

Eternal God, who requirest of all men that they walk humbly with Thee, take from us, we pray Thee, all pride and vanity and give unto us true humility and faith. By our dependence on Thee in the secret of our hearts may we be given true independence in the face of our fellowmen. By being subject to Thee, O God, may we be released from the fear of man. By loving Thee and trusting Thee may we be enabled to overcome the cares and anxieties of life. Give unto us, we pray Thee, a watchful, humble and diligent spirit that we may in all things submit to Thy will and daily fulfil it. We would not order our own lives, O Lord, but do Thou in all things direct us who commit ourselves anew to Thy guidance and care.

From all false pride in ourselves,
 From all false humility in the presence of others,
 From all flattery of human power
Good Lord, deliver us.

From disregard of Thy Divine Power,
 From the folly of forgetting Thee,
 From the sin of resisting Thee
Good Lord, deliver us.

Give to us the truthful, happy spirit of a child,
 Give to us the wisdom of reverence and the peace
 of faith,
 Give to us the blessedness of all who put their trust
 in Thee.
We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

18 'A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE'

Give to us the vision that teaches us to acknowledge Thee,

Give to us obedience whereby we may do Thy will,
Give us the strength of all who are devoted to Thee.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

O God, our Father, we come to Thee for refuge from the oppression of proud and self-centred thoughts. May we worship Thee in humility and gladness and may we be made cheerful and strong by committing ourselves to Thy love and care.

'Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart
And for His dwelling and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.'

May the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart be acceptable unto Thee, O God, our strength and our Redeemer. AMEN.

PRAISE

Look at the first window on the wall of the Chapel. You will see that it represents a musical instrument, a harp. This is the symbol of the Praise of God. It has been put there to remind us that man's first duty is to show forth the Greatness and Goodness of God. When I was a boy I was taught to repeat certain questions and answers. One of them was this, 'What is man's chief end?' That is to say, what is the chief aim or purpose of man's life? And the answer to it was: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever'; and the word 'glorify' means very much the same as praise. Thus we were taught the greatest of all truths that man is most himself and is most truly

what he ought to be, when he takes delight in praising God's immeasurable goodness. A man becomes inhuman when he finds no pleasure in dwelling upon the Glory of God. The great poet Tulsidas said this, 'Without adoring Thee I am not at peace. With bowed head and folded hands, then, let me sing the story of Thy greatness'. The most important thing in all religion is the adoration of God, the joyful giving to God what is His due, the worship of man's soul. The Christian Church in Russia is called the Orthodox Church. In the English language the word 'Orthodox' means a church that professes true doctrine. But I was much interested to read recently that in the Russian language the word means a Church that renders true praise. That is a very suggestive reminder that a Church primarily exists for the praise of God. Some of you may think that this makes religion too other-worldly, too remote from man's most urgent needs and duties. It is not so. There is nothing that makes man so happy as the Praise of God. If man's chief duty is to glorify God it is not a duty that is a wearisome burden to him. It is constant enjoyment. It is significant that the praise of God and song and music are associated together. When they are happy men sing. When their feelings are deeply stirred they use music to express themselves. How many songs and hymns in all languages have as their theme the praise of God! It is expressed beautifully by Rabindranath Tagore, 'I look to Thy face and drunk with the joy of singing I forget myself and call Thee friend who art my Lord', and in the Bible this magnificent summons to praise is heard, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song; Sing unto the Lord, all the earth. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; Honour and majesty are before

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Him. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary' (*Psalm* 96: 1, 4, 6). Not only is praise the inspiration and token of joy, it is also true that nothing does man more good than to join in the praise of God. In the passage quoted above the poet has said that in the joy of singing in the Presence of God he forgets himself. The source of all human goodness is self-forgetfulness. There is nothing we can do which so lifts us above ourselves, which so purifies our souls, as to dwell with joy and wonder on the excellent greatness of God.

'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth' (*Psalm* 8: 1).

Let us pray

The following is a portion of the greatest song of praise in use in the Christian Church:

'We praise Thee, O God, We acknowledge Thee to
be the Lord;
All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father Ever-
lasting;
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory;
The Holy Church throughout all the world doth
acknowledge Thee
The Father of an infinite majesty.'

And this is a prayer of one of the greatest religious thinkers of the West, St. Augustine:

'Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power and Thy wisdom is infinite. Thee would we praise, without ceasing. Thou callest us to delight in Thy praise, for Thou has made us for Thyself, and our hearts find no rest until we rest in Thee.'

This, too, is a well known hymn:

‘Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven,
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the Everlasting King.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of Grace.’

Nothing can be compared with Thy greatness and goodness.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

Though we know Thou art great and good, we never can know how good and great Thou art.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

When we turn to Thee, we turn away from all evil.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

When Thou fillest our souls, all that is shameful is shut out from them.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

When we see Thy glory, a song is put upon our lips.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

When our souls rest in Thee, joy is born within us.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

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Thou art Good, Thou art merciful, Thou art gracious.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

Thou art faithful, Thou art true, Thou art changeless.

We praise Thee, O Lord.

O Heavenly Father, accept the Praise we now have offered unto Thee. Never can it be worthy of Thee. Never can we understand the wonder of Thy nature or the perfection of Thy Being. Were it possible for us to know Thee as Thou art, never could we utter such knowledge in words. But the more we know of Thee, the more do we desire to praise Thee, O God. We praise Thee for Thyself, because Thou art ever Thyself same glorious self. Our true life lies in forgetting ourselves and in remembering Thee. Draw us to Thyself by the power of Thy excellence, and may we never lose the joy and hope of putting our whole trust in Thee.

'Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord for He is kind
For His mercies aye endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.'

Blessed be the Lord God. Blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. AMEN.

THANKSGIVING

Praise and thanksgiving have much in common. But there is a difference between them. When we praise God we are thinking of Him as He is in Himself, incomparably great and good. When we give thanks to

Him we are thinking chiefly of His wonderful goodness to us. This does not mean that in a prayer of thanksgiving our thoughts are on ourselves more than on God. Rather do we think of ourselves as dependent on the goodness of God. In our thanksgiving, too, we must be satisfied with what He has given us and not complain that His gifts are too few. We must not demand from Him what He has in His wisdom withheld from us. That is very beautifully expressed by Rabindranath Tagore:

‘My desires are many and my cry is pitiful, but ever didst Thou save me by hard refusals, and this strong mercy has been wrought into my life through and through.

Day by day Thou art making me worthy of the simple, great gifts that Thou gavest to me unasked—this sky and the light, this body and the life and the mind, saving me from perils of overmuch desire’.

We should think specially of these phrases:

‘Thou didst save me by hard refusals.’

‘The simple great gifts that Thou gavest me unasked.’

‘The perils of overmuch desire.’

Thus does the poet describe how contentment is learnt. Thanksgiving presupposes contentment. How can we cultivate a thankful and contented spirit? First of all by learning that we can claim no privileges. In God’s Providence many of the simplest, greatest things are shared by all alike, by the just and by the unjust. Jesus once said, ‘Your Father in Heaven maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust’ (*Matthew* 5: 45). That may seem

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to some people unfair. They claim that God's gifts should be given as rewards for merit. But that would put an end to gratitude. Those who are grateful have learnt to accept the simple great gifts of health and knowledge and love. We must rejoice in God's gifts as He has given them and not demand from Him what we desire. We have to be saved from the 'perils of overmuch desire'. In one of his hymns the famous essayist, Joseph Addison, wrote this:

'Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes these gifts with joy.'

Then again we must not allow ourselves to be obsessed by troubles and difficulties. If we but think humbly and not arrogantly about our life, we will discover that there has been in it far more happiness than sadness. An ungrateful person magnifies his troubles and forgets his blessings. That is the wrong way to look at life. We should make the most of our blessings, and when we do that, we will find that there are far more of them than we ever thought there were. In the Bible the following sentence occurs in a Psalm expressing gratitude:

'How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me,
O God. How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are more in number
than the sand.' (*Psalm* 139: 17, 18).

'Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ.'

Let us pray

Gracious God, who hast taught us that it is a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful; give us grace, we beseech Thee, to be truly and sincerely thankful for all Thy mercies bestowed on us, and grant that we may use all Thy gifts to set forth Thy glory and set forward our own salvation.

‘THOU DOST SAVE US BY HARD REFUSALS’

We thank Thee, O God:

That we can claim naught from Thee,
That we receive at Thy hand far more than we
deserve,
That our thanksgiving is deepened the more we
understand our unworthiness.

We thank Thee, O God:

That Thou hast not given us what would harm us,
That Thou knowest what is good for us better than
we do,
That Thou dost teach us what are the most precious
things in life by withholding from us things
that do not profit.

‘THE SIMPLE GREAT GIFTS THAT THOU GIVEST UNASKED’

We thank Thee, O God:

For the universe, our great home,
For its vastness and its riches,
For the wonder of its life in which we have our share.

We thank Thee, O God:

For our mortal bodies, so perishable but so wonderful,
For our human nature, so prone to err but with
what possibilities!

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For our minds, to which Thou dost give Thy great gift of understanding.

We thank Thee, O God:

For our immortal souls, and Thy greatest gift, the life everlasting,

For our wills, which are ours to make them Thine,
For our hearts and the affections that bind us to one another and to Thee.

'SAVE US FROM THE PERILS OF OVERMUCH DESIRE'

O Merciful God, save us from selfishness and love of luxury, from claiming from Thee more than we need and from all unwillingness to share with others what Thou hast given to us. Give to us, O God, contented minds that love and prize the gifts Thou dost bestow. Give us simple hearts that gratefully respond to Thy blessings. Give us trustful souls that never doubt Thy constant goodness.

'When all Thy mercies, O my God!
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost,
In wonder, love and praise.'

May the wonder of Thy grace possess us, may Thy goodness awaken within us true love to Thee and may we show forth Thy praise not only with our lips but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to Thy service and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days.

'Then let us adore, and give Him His right,
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
All honour and blessing, with Angels above,
And thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.'

AMEN.

PENITENCE

In the presence of God every man knows he is a sinner. It is only when we are brought face to face with God's righteousness that we know ourselves as we really are. We all know enough about ourselves to see that our lives are not what they ought to be. But it is only when we know God and venture into His presence, that we reach that deep and true self-knowledge that makes us confess we are sinners in His sight. No sooner do we know this truth about ourselves than we all feel we dare not approach Him. We know ourselves forsaken and helpless. With his characteristic sense of obligation to God, the Mahratta saint, Tukaram, made this confession:

'I cannot reach Him, I feel distressed.
 There are many who rule over me.
 I am fast bound and I cannot loose myself;
 I am fallen into the power of my past.
 A grievous load lies upon my head,
 The claims of "I" and "mine".
 I am robbed by bold thieves in my own house,
 Though I know it all the time.'

'Bound, burdened, robbed,' that is how he describes his state. And notice that he accepts full responsibility. 'I know it all the time.' He confesses that it was he himself who had admitted into his life the power that had despoiled him and gained the mastery over him. And notice again how forsaken he feels himself to be, 'I cannot reach Him,' and how helpless he is, 'I cannot loose myself'.

In that confession of Tukaram we feel that what he is chiefly conscious of is the misery and helplessness

which he has brought on himself. That feeling is always a large part of a man's consciousness of sin. But there is a deeper and more terrible feeling that can enter into a man's sense of sin. It was expressed by the writer of one of the Psalms in the Bible in the words, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Thy sight' (*Psalms* 51: 4). That is the deepest thing that can be said about a man's sin, that it is resistance to God's will and banishment from His presence. That is what sin really is, the deliberate disobedience of God. And that immensely deepens the problem of deliverance and increases its urgency. But, strange to say, whenever a man admits the gravity of his offence and his own helplessness, there is hope for him, because he looks to God for deliverance, and deliverance can come from nowhere else. That is what Penitence is, admission of full responsibility, a sense of utmost need and utter dependence upon God.

Jesus once told a story that made the meaning of Penitence wonderfully clear. Here it is:

'Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, this man went down to his house accepted by God rather than the other; for everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted' (*Luke* 18: 10-14).

The one man saw no reason for penitence. He was self-righteous, satisfied with himself. His knowledge of himself was superficial. When he was praying he was not really thinking of God at all. He was thinking of himself. The other man was deeply, truly penitent. His knowledge of himself was profound. He was filled with the sense of God's righteousness and his own unworthiness. The one man could never be a better man than he was. The other had called on God to lift him out of his shame and helplessness. When he was at the end of all his resources hope began to dawn. He had besought the help of God, and for the sinner there is no other hope.

In the presence of God let us confess our sins

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name.

‘UNTO WHOM ALL HEARTS BE OPEN’

We confess, O God, that we shut our hearts to Thee and would fain hide their secrets even from Thee.

We thank Thee that Thou knowest us altogether, and that in Thy presence we can pretend to be nothing but what we really are.

‘ALL DESIRES KNOWN UNTO THEE, O GOD’

Desires that Thou canst satisfy, desires that are good and selfless, all our aspirations, all our ideals.

Desires that are contrary to Thy will, proud, complaining, rebellious desires.

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Desires that we are ashamed of, untrue, impure,
selfish desires.

All are known to Thee, O God.

'CLEANSE THE THOUGHTS OF OUR HEARTS, O GOD'

We cannot of ourselves make them pure. We must
all accept these words as our own,

'So weak am I, O gracious Lord,
So all unworthy Thee,
That e'en the dust upon Thy feet
Outweighs me utterly.'

(*Narayan Waman Tilak*)

We cannot dispel the guilty secrets of our own hearts.

So this must be the prayer of each one of us—

'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new
steadfast spirit in me' (*Psalms* 51: 10).

'THAT WE MAY PERFECTLY LOVE THEE'

Only those who have been forgiven much can love
Thee as Thou shouldst be loved.

Only those who owe Thee more than they can ever
repay know what it is to love Thee as they should.

May we pass through the experience described in
these words:

'O to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.'

In Thy mercy, O gracious God, forgive us our mani-
fold sins and wickednesses.

'Sins of deed and sins of thought,
 Sins of speech and sins of imagination,
 Sins of fear and sins of malice,
 Sins deliberate and thoughtless sins,
 Sins of not doing what we know we ought to do,
 Sins of doing what we ought not to do.

'Lord, Thy mercy now entreating,
 Low before Thy throne we fall;
 Our misdeeds to Thee confessing
 On Thy name we humbly call.'

Unto Him who loved us and loosed us from our sins
 be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN.

PETITION

Prayer is Worship, Praise, Thanksgiving, Penitence, and we can without difficulty believe in the value and power of such prayer. But in all prayer Petition finds a place. In every living religion the worshipper is encouraged to ask God for blessings of one kind and another. That was specially so in the teaching of Jesus Christ. He taught His followers that they should ask for God's blessing with earnestness and freedom and confidence. One of the most beautiful things He ever said was this: 'If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him' (*Matthew 7: 11*). The words mean that there is no limit to the willingness and power of God to bless His children. Yet many a prayer seems to us to be unanswered and we doubt whether it is much use making direct petitions to God. But though our prayers may not be answered in the way we hope for, we must not argue



that God cannot or will not bless us. Rather should we ask ourselves whether our prayers deserve an answer. When we make our requests known unto God we must make them thoughtfully and reverently and submit ourselves to thorough self-examination. We should ask ourselves questions like these. Do we really want what we ask for? Many a time we ask God for what we know is right, but we do not ask for it with all our heart. Rabindranath Tagore makes this confession: 'Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed; when I come to ask for my good, I quake in fear lest my prayer be granted.' These words show wonderful insight into the human heart. Though our prayers may be for what we believe God in His wisdom desires to give us, we may not put ourselves into our prayers. It may be that in our heart of hearts we really quake in fear lest our prayers be granted. St. Augustine tells us that before the great crisis of his life, when he became completely obedient to God, many a time he prayed the prayer: 'O Lord, make me pure,' but in his secret heart he added, 'but not now'. Such half-hearted prayer could bring no answer. That is the first thing we should remember when we ask God for anything, that we must desire it with all our heart. Another question we may ask ourselves is this, are we prepared to use God's gifts, when He gives them to us, in the way in which He wants us to use them? Obviously God will not give us what we want, if, when we have got it, we use it selfishly for our own advantage. For instance we might pray for health and freedom from disease. But unless we are ready to preserve our health, when it is given us, by living healthy and energetic lives and using our health in the service of others, we have no moral right to ask for it. When we pray for the means of livelihood, are we satisfied with

just 'our daily bread' for which Jesus taught us to pray, with just enough to keep us fit to do God's will? We often pray for success in some undertaking. When we pray a prayer like that, we cannot seriously expect it to be answered, unless we have made up our mind to make a right use of success, if it is granted us. There is a third thing to remember about the requests we make to God. We must accompany all such requests with the humble confession that God knows what is best for us, and that His will and not our wilfulness is the source of all good. In this as in everything else Jesus is a perfect example to us. When He realised that He would be called upon to endure great suffering, He prayed most earnestly that He might be spared such suffering. We are told that He fell on His face and prayed saying, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me'. In that prayer He was comparing suffering to something that He was required to drink. But to that prayer in which He besought God to save Him from the approaching ordeal He added these beautiful words, 'Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done'. That is the perfect prayer. In it the wisdom and goodness of God are fully acknowledged. It is a prayer of complete personal resignation. But it is more than that. It is a prayer for strength to do God's will at whatever cost of suffering. That prayer does not limit the freedom of a believer's prayer. There must be such freedom to express every deeply felt longing and desire. The believer must make known to God all that he earnestly desires. But along with that must go the admission that only God's will is good and acceptable and perfect, and that in the doing of His will lies man's true good. 'Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done'.

Let us pray

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking, we beseech Thee to have compassion on our infirmities; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the worthiness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ.

Gracious Father, Thou 'knowest our necessities before we ask'; may the knowledge of Thy wisdom and love not cause us to hesitate in making known to Thee our requests, but may we thereby be encouraged to open our hearts freely to Thee. We confess 'our ignorance in asking'. Like foolish children we know not what we should pray for as we ought, and we are tempted to imagine that Thy goodness is revealed when Thou dost give to us what we desire.

Help us, O God, to learn that Thy love is more often made known by withholding from us what we want that Thou mayest give to us the true good which Thou dost want us to enjoy. We confess 'our unworthiness whereby we dare not ask' of Thee. We cling to desires which we could not utter in Thy presence. Our lives are so at variance with our prayers, that there is no eagerness in our petitions or urgency in our requests. Kindle within us earnestness of desire, O God.

And do Thou, Merciful Father, so cleanse our souls that our deepest desires may more and more accord with Thy blessed Will. May we covet earnestly the best gifts. May no indifference or lack of desire leave us as we are, and may no excess of selfish desires make us ask for what Thou canst not give us.

We pray for continuance of health and strength, O God, and may Thy gifts of life and livelihood be used by us for Thy Glory.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that by Thy mercy we may be kept from all harm, and may Thy protecting care make us eager to dare much for Thee.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that we may have good success in all our endeavours, and may Thy blessing make us more forgetful of ourselves and more mindful of Thee.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, whose grace is sufficient for all our needs, do Thou hear our prayer and let our cry come unto Thee. AMEN.

INTERCESSION

In prayer we not only ask blessings for ourselves. We also learn to pray for others. Prayer for others is called Intercession, and that kind of prayer should have its place in all our worship of God. Why is that?

First of all, because God whom we worship is the God of all mankind. There are many passages in the Bible that teach us to remember this. Here are a few of them:

‘The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. He fashioneth their hearts alike; He considereth all their works’ (*Psalms* 33: 13, 15).

‘God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.’ (*Acts* 10: 34–35).

'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have everlasting life' (*John* 3: 16).

All these passages, and many like them, remind us that God desires the good of all men and that at different times and in many ways He makes Himself known to all peoples. Thus when we pray to God and try to learn His will that we may do it, we are inevitably reminded of other people, who need God's help as much as we do, and whom God desires to help as much as He desires to help us. If we realize what we are doing when we pray, we will feel ourselves drawn nearer to others, when we draw near to God, who is over all and in all. Rabindranath Tagore writes this in his *Gitanjali*, 'Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in houses not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger'. What a beautiful thought is expressed in these words! God's presence is everywhere, and His love for everyone is so wide that in Him all the separate are brought together and they that are far-off are made nigh. Sometimes we meet people who take delight in introducing us to others and who promote good feeling wherever they are. In all reverence we may say that God when we humbly draw near to Him introduces us to new friends.

Secondly, we should pray for others because God cares for everyone separately. We are often tempted to think that the individual is of no importance as compared with mankind as a whole. We can't think that God on Whom the whole vast system of things depends can care for the single seemingly insignificant person. When such thoughts take hold of us we are ceasing to understand God. The fact is that God loves

the world, and he loves the single persons who make up the big world, loves them each one. The better an engineer a man is, the more will he know the detailed separate parts of a great building that has been built under his supervision. In the same way God is great enough to care for each as well as for the great whole of which each is but a small part. As Jesus said: 'It is not the will of your Father in Heaven that ONE of these little ones should perish' (*Matthew* 18: 14). Moreover God perfectly understands the individual. He knows the strength and the weakness of each one. That is one of the reasons why God is merciful. 'He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.' (*Psalms* 103: 14). That is a truth that Christian faith most earnestly believes. Christ is spoken of as 'a merciful and faithful high priest ever living to make intercession for men and able to succour them that are tempted in that He himself hath suffered being tempted' (*Hebrews* 2: 17, 18; 7: 25). That thought is expressed very beautifully in the following poem:

'Thou knowest us, Lord Christ, Thou knowest;
Well Thou rememberest our feeble frame,
Thou canst conceive our highest and our lowest,
Pulses of nobleness and aches of shame.

Therefore have pity!—not that we accuse Thee,
Curse Thee and die and charge Thee with our woe;
Not thro' Thy fault, O Holy One, we lose Thee,
Nay, but our own,—yet hast Thou made us so!

Then though our foul and limitless transgression
Grows with our growing, with our breath began,
Raise Thou the arms of endless intercession,
Jesus, divinest when Thou most art man!

As children of the Heavenly Father of all, as brothers of the Son of Man, we are called to imitate however feebly that eternal intercession for all men. In fellowship with God, who carest for all, we have to learn to look beyond our own needs to the needs of others, to catch something of His width of sympathy and His saving love for each person.

Let us pray for others

In speaking to God on behalf of others let us use these beautiful words with which St. Augustine addressed Him:

'O Thou Almighty Goodness, who carest for each one of us, as if Thou caredst for him alone, and for all as if they were each alone.' May that thought of God be uppermost in our minds as we make intercession for others.

O Thou Almighty Goodness, who carest for each one of us, as if Thou caredst for him alone, and for all as if they were each alone, we praise Thee as the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, as the Heavenly Father of all, who callest each one of us by name. We praise Thee that, though Thou dost control the whole universe, Thou dost care for each single individual. We praise Thee that all Thy love and pity are given to each person, though Thou hast all mankind to love and care for. We praise Thee as the Perfect Father who lovest all as one family, and yet knowest how to love each one who belongs to it. Teach us, O Lord, to interest ourselves in others. Give us Thy spirit that we may not live unto ourselves; give unto us a measure of Thy love so wide and so intense, so universal and so understanding. Our hearts are small, O Lord, do Thou enlarge them; our sympathies are narrow, do Thou, O Lord, widen and deepen them. Regard not we

beseech Thee the feebleness of our prayers, and do for us and for those for whom we pray more than we can ask or think.

We pray Thee for the members of our families, that we may be united in true affection and in the service of one another.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our College, that all belonging to it may have a true love of knowledge and may learn the love of Thee, which is the beginning and end of all knowledge.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our country that she may become what Thou in Thy wisdom willest her to become, righteous and united, at peace within herself and at peace with all men. And teach us to love her, O Lord, not in word only but in deed and in truth.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray Thee for all mankind that Thy ways may be known on the earth, Thy saving health unto all nations. May Thy strong hand control the peoples and cause them to long for Thy love to rule on the earth. Guide, we pray Thee, all rulers and leaders of men that they may seek first Thy Kingdom and the establishing of justice and freedom for all peoples, both small and great. And in Thy mercy, O Lord, comfort and relieve all who are any ways afflicted and distressed.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and toward all men.

AMEN.

III

LIFE

CHARACTER

You will remember that in the first of these services we were thinking of the question that perplexed the mind of Moses and his people, What is God's name? Is He a Person? What is His character? Today we are going to think of a question that Jesus once asked, What is thy name? (*Luke 8: 30*). He was speaking to a wretched man who had lost his reason, who had ceased to be a person, who had lost all character. Jesus was trying to restore the man's personality and rebuild his character. It is a very striking thing that His first question to the man was, What is thy name? There is a close connection between having a name and being a person. The unhappy man to whom Jesus was speaking had forgotten he had a name, because he had ceased to be a person. That was the point of Jesus' question, What is thy name? By asking it He was helping the man to realize that he ought to have a character of his own and be a real person. Moses' question, What is God's name? is man's eager question whether he dare believe that God is a person. Jesus' question is God's challenge to man to be a person and possess a character. The divine challenge is that we should make of this strange nature that God has given us a unified, dependable, good character. The challenge comes to everyone of us. What is your name? Have you a character that is strong and true?

And how are we to get a character like that? In us there are instincts and impulses, feelings and sentiments. We know only too well that they are at conflict one with another, so that we are not at peace in ourselves. The good within us is frustrated by what is bad in our nature. What is needed to make our nature a unified whole in the service of the good? All that is in us needs to be brought under the control of a supreme loyalty that appeals to what is deepest in us. The truest thing about us is that we have been made to be dependent, to be mastered. As one of our English hymns puts it:

‘My heart is weak and poor
Until it Master find’

and a great psychologist, William McDougall, has stated this truth in this way. He compares our human nature to a great business organization with different departments and a large staff of employees with many different functions to perform. They represent our instincts and emotions. Then he points out that the organization cannot become efficient until it has a head, a manager, someone to control the whole of it. To quote his actual words, ‘Only under such co-ordinating direction does the organization become integrated into a true unity capable of maintaining the highest efficiency under adverse and changing circumstances’. And he explains that this human nature of ours needs to be brought under a ‘Master sentiment’, as he calls it, that will control everything within us.

And what is that inner control of man’s nature that makes character? It is the love of God. That is what makes man’s character strong and dependable, efficient in the service of the good. That is why Jesus said

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that 'the first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind' (*Matthew 22: 37, 38*). When the love of God possesses man's nature then all that is within him is ordered aright and his character rests on the surest foundation.

Rabindranath Tagore must have been thinking of this when he wrote: 'I am only waiting for love to give myself up at last into His hands. That is why it is so late and why I have been guilty of such omissions. I am only waiting for love to give myself up at last into His Hands.' There is something very sad about what the poet says, 'That is why it is so late'. Don't let it be 'so late' before you give yourself up at last into God's hands. He is your rightful master. He can draw to Himself all that is in you. When He holds the centre of your life, then all your powers and gifts are unified and guided. And remember God wants no power over you but the power of love. He would be welcomed into your life. He will never force an entrance against your will. Don't let it be 'so late', don't wait too long till you give yourself up at last into His hands.

Let us pray

Our Lord and our God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, that we might find fulness of life in Thee, that we might come under the mastery of Thy love and grace, that we might bless Thee with all that is within us.

Hearken to our Thanksgiving we beseech Thee,
O God.

That Thou hast made us living souls that may be united to Thee in loving devotion,

We thank Thee, O God.

That Thou hast given us minds that can think Thy
thoughts after Thee,
We thank Thee, O God.

That Thou hast given us hearts that long for what is
eternal,
We thank Thee, O God.

That Thou hast given us wills that may be guided
by Thy acceptable and perfect will,
We thank Thee, O God.

For the spiritual within us to which belongs the
mastery over all else within us,
For the instinctive reverence we feel for the good,
For all within us that makes us seek Thee,
We thank Thee, O God.

That Thou wilt not force Thy will upon us,
That Thou dost ask of us a willing obedience,
That Thou art waiting in love for us to give our-
selves up into Thy Hands,
We thank Thee, O God.

Thou hast taught us, O God, that the whole of our
nature is Thine, that all our powers are fulfilled when
they are committed to Thee, that all may be sanctified
when all is given to Thee.

Do Thou, O Lord, deliver us from all that deceives
us into thinking that we are better without Thee, from
all that makes us self-sufficient and self-centred, from
all that keeps us unmastered by Thee.

By Thy love manifested unto us may we make our-
selves a living sacrifice unto Thee.

Hear us, O Lord.

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By the blessedness of those who serve Thee may we
become Thy servants.

Hear us, O Lord.

By the needs of our nature may we be guided to
Thee.

Hear us, O Lord.

By the urgency of life's problems may we come to
Thee without waiting too long, to Thee who art the
solution of them all,

Hear us, O Lord.

Thus may we love Thee with heart and soul, with
mind and strength and in keeping this Thy first and
great commandment may we be enabled to keep all
other commandments that Thou in mercy dost lay
upon us.

May this be our daily prayer:

'Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.'

May the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and may
your spirit, soul and body be preserved entire and
without blame. AMEN.

SURRENDER

In the last address we have seen that man is made
to be mastered by God. But the strange thing about
him is that he resists such mastery. He is under the
tragic delusion that God's control over him will deprive
him of what he ought to keep for himself. Man
understands himself so little that he thinks that he is

most himself when he keeps the direction of his life in his own hands. When God's claim over him is made on man there is always the probability that in his pride he will resist it. He cannot believe that God's demand on him is the demand of love, and that the best thing he could do would be to yield to it. That is his greatest folly, his most pitiable self-deception. It leads on to the worst thing that he can do, resist God's rightful claim over him. The power God uses to press home His claim upon man is the power of grace and truth. It is not like other kinds of power that enforce submission on others for the advantage of those who wield the power. But God's power is like all other power in this that it can be satisfied with nothing less than surrender. Personal religion means man's surrender to God. Surrender usually comes at the end of a struggle, the struggle between man's pride and God's right over him. Very often the best men are those in whom that struggle has been most intense. The reason is that such men, when they make their surrender to God, make a complete and whole-hearted surrender. The Bible tells us of men like that. In the Old Testament there is the story of Jacob (*Genesis* 32: 24-31). His nature was hard to subdue. He was the most self-reliant of men. In a way he had made a success of life. He had gained much by his cleverness and unscrupulousness. But he was unsatisfied. He knew his life was not as it ought to be, because he trusted in himself more than in God. He never could get rid of the feeling that he ought to give over the control of his life into God's hands, and yet he did not want to do it. The struggle that went on in him is compared to a wrestling match. In the end Jacob was overcome and could strive against God no

longer. The struggle ended in God's victory. But though it was God's victory, it was Jacob's victory too. Surrender brought him blessing, and submission was the beginning of new life. Another story of the same kind is taken from the New Testament, the story of the great change that took place in Saul's life (*Acts 9: 3-8*). It is a story of how he became the devoted follower of Christ. It was not easy for him to make his surrender to Christ. He had withstood His power over him for a long time. The struggle that went on in him is likened to a bullock at the plough which will not submit to control; 'it kicks against the goad'. But in the end Christ mastered him completely. As he said himself in another place (*Philippians 3: 12*) 'Christ had laid hold of him.' And here again surrender did not mean the loss of anything that was worth keeping. It was the beginning of a wonderful creative life of service. In other struggles in which man is engaged surrender is disgraceful, it is the mark of defeat, it spells humiliation and weakness. But the wonderful thing is that in man's struggle with God to give in is to receive all, to surrender brings freedom and self-respect. It betokens not weakness but strength. That is why Rabindranath Tagore says, 'Give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will with love.' That puts the wonderful paradox perfectly. And the same truth is even more strikingly expressed by an English poet of the seventeenth century in these words:

'Yield to His siege, wise soul, and see
Your triumph in His victory.
'Tis cowardice that keeps this field;
And want of courage not to yield.
Yield then, O yield that love may win
The fort at last, and let life in.'

Let us pray

Gracious God, our true Lord and Master, Thou hast given us the strange gift of freedom that we might willingly commit ourselves to Thee; Thou hast given us wills of our own that we might make them Thine; Thou hast given us power over ourselves that we might resign it into Thy hands; Thou hast revealed to us Thy claim over us and Thy right to our obedience. Grant us, O Lord, the desire and the will to submit to Thy claim and to render Thee true obedience.

From the self-deception that hides from us the truth
that it is in love Thou dost claim us,
Deliver us, good Lord.

From the doubts that make us question Thy love
when Thou dost demand control over us,
Deliver us, good Lord.

From the folly that would keep up the struggle
against Thee,
Deliver us, good Lord.

From the weakness that shrinks from Thy demands,
Deliver us, good Lord.

From the fear that Thou wilt ask too much of us,
Deliver us, good Lord.

Give to us we beseech Thee, O Lord—

The wisdom to see that surrender to Thee is no
humiliation but the way to self-fulfilment,

The insight to understand that when Thou dost control
our lives Thou wilt take from us no good, but wilt
confer upon us every good,

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The courage to give up our trust in ourselves, which so often misleads us, that we may trust Thee who dost never disappoint,

The strength to make surrender of ourselves to Thee that Thou mayest direct and inspire our lives.

May we not look upon Thee as a Master who would enslave us,

May we see Thee as the Deliverer who will set us free.

Lord, hear our prayer.

May we not use our wills wilfully against Thee,

May we commit them trustfully to Thee.

Lord, hear our prayer.

May we not give Thee a grudging obedience that resents Thy control,

May we give Thee a willing obedience, so that it will be our joy to do our Master's will.

Lord, hear our prayer.

O Thou who hast taught us that we are most truly free when we lose our will in Thine, help us to gain this liberty by continual surrender unto Thee.

It is such inner liberty that we need, liberty from the frustration that besets the good life we feign would live, liberty to be our best selves, liberty to do what we know we ought to do.

We are slow, O God, to believe that we can find it only in surrender to Thee. Hasten, we beseech Thee, our enlightenment, and give us grace daily to commit ourselves into Thy loving hands.

Subjection to Thee, O God, is renewal. To be vanquished by Thee is to be restored to life and truth. Bring us under subjection to Thee that we may be renewed in spirit and vanquish us that we may be restored.

May Thy love win a victorious entrance into the fortress of our hearts which we have defended so foolishly against Thee, and as Victor over us give us, O Lord, Thy great gift of life.

Now the God of all grace make us perfect, stablish and strengthen us. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN.

TEMPTATION

When speaking of character I illustrated what I had to say about it by quoting William McDougall's comparison between character and a well organized business under a capable head. You may remember that one of the advantages of such a business was that its efficiency could be maintained 'under adverse and changing circumstances'. When it has the right leadership an organisation can struggle through periods of difficulty and strain without collapse. The same is true of character. When we have the true Master of our lives to lead and guide us we can withstand adverse circumstances. Circumstances that are adverse to character are called temptation. Everyone is exposed to temptation. However good a man's character may be he cannot escape temptation. Even Jesus was tempted. It is said of Him, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (*Hebrews* 4: 15). His temptations were different from ours. No man is tempted just in the same way as another. But neither Jesus nor any one else can escape the universal experience of temptation. Temptation is the test of character. Strength of character is proved by the way it stands the test. Character would not be the wonderful thing it is if it never had to face 'adverse circumstances'. Its value is proved by the way it can stand up to trouble and

temptation. As St. Paul said 'Trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope' (*Romans* 5: 3, 4—Moffat's Translation).

Sad to say, it is an all too common experience to yield to temptation. What makes us yield to temptation? There is a passage in the New Testament which gives a very good explanation of it. This is the passage: 'Each man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed' (*James* 1: 14). The important words are 'drawn away'. Drawn away from what, from Whom? What is meant is that a man feels the full force of temptation, when he is drawn away from God, when God's control over his life is weakened, when God ceases to hold the central place in his life. Then the evil in him gets the upper hand. There is nothing to prevent it making a tragic alliance with the evil that is without him. That means giving in to temptation and the result is a loss of strength of character. When faced with temptation everything depends on a man's strength of will. Man's strength of will is greatest when he depends on God's will. His chief danger lies in a false self-confidence. As St. Paul very wisely said, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (*1 Corinthians* 10: 12). How often it is the case that the man who boasts he is able to withstand temptation by his own strength of will is the very man who yields most ignominiously to it! Man is at his weakest when he thinks he can do without God's help, when he is 'drawn away' from Him. Then what the Bible calls 'lust' asserts itself. The word simply means our natural instincts and impulses. When they are without their proper control they always lead us astray, and we fall easy victims to temptation. The evil within us and the evil without us conspire to bring about our downfall.

If it is true that temptation gains an easy victory over us when we are 'drawn away' from God it is obvious that the secret of success in the struggle with temptation is to see that God remains in control of our lives. This is simply to emphasise what was said when we were thinking of 'character', that man's true life, his power to live victoriously, depends upon his submitting to God's control, upon keeping God at the centre of his life. We never can withstand temptation unaided. We must learn that God is our true ally in the struggle with it. We must call in His help when we are hard pressed by it. Jesus taught us to pray this prayer: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (*Matthew 6: 13*). That is the translation of the words in the authorised version of the Bible. The full force of the words might be better expressed by some such translation as this, 'Never lead us into any temptation without delivering us from our evil choice'. That way of putting it makes the prayer relevant to our daily lives. We pray that God will not allow us to be put to any test that is beyond our power of endurance. We can pray no better prayer. This is what it means, 'Help us, O God, always to choose the right'. When temptation comes, as come it will, our only hope of resisting it is to pray that God will help us, and He cannot help us unless He has the mastery over us, unless we have committed ourselves to Him. That is what is brought out very beautifully in these lines from one of our Christian hymns:

'Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour;
Let His will enfold you
In its light and power.'

As we pray let us remember that we are being continually tempted, that we live in the midst of circumstances adverse to our true character, that there is in us a lawless something that responds to the evil around us, that for that reason we find it hard to be faithful to God and His will. Let us set before ourselves the temptations that we find it hardest to resist. Is one of them dishonesty and the desire to obtain advantage for ourselves by deceit or by ways that we instinctively conceal? Are we tempted to live selfishly and to think only of ourselves? Do we forget our duty to others and by neglect or indifference add to their difficulties and burdens? Is vanity or conceit a special temptation to us making us magnify trivial offences and making us quick to resent them? Do we find it hard to control our thoughts and our desires so that they dwell on things that defile our inner life? Do we resist these unworthy things, or do we give in, thinking they are so much a part of ourselves that we cannot withstand them? Above all, do we yield without remembering that God could help us to resist? Let us ask God to teach us the secret of victory over our temptations.

Let us pray

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto us that we may love the thing which Thou commandest and desire that which Thou dost promise; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.

'THOU CANST ORDER OUR UNRULY WILLS AND AFFECTIONS'—

We know how unstable and impulsive our wills are;
We confess that we cannot order them aright and
keep our character unshaken;

We believe that only Thy perfect will can govern our unruly wills.

Preserve in us, O God, such knowledge of our own wilfulness, such confession of our own weakness, and such faith in Thy governance that distrusting ourselves and trusting in Thee we may be kept safe when temptations assail us.

Lord hear our prayer.

‘THAT WE MAY LOVE THE THING WHICH THOU
COMMANDEST’—

If we love Thy commands we will willingly obey them.

If we love Thy law we will keep it with an undivided heart.

If we love Thy will we will never be ‘drawn away’ from Thee.

Awaken in us such love to Thee, O Lord, that what Thou dost command shall be good and acceptable unto us. May no temptation lead us away from it that thus we may faithfully perform it.

Lord, hear our prayer.

‘THAT OUR HEARTS MAY BE FIXED’—

The source of all our weakness is that we wander from Thee.

The cause of all our shame is that we forsake Thee.

‘The manifold changes of the world’ work a fatal change in our allegiance to Thee, O God, and thus we suffer ourselves to be overcome of evil.

Bring our hearts, O Lord, to such attachment to Thee and to Thy Holy Will; may they be so fixed on

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Thee, that in our many temptations we may remain unmoved and unshaken in love and obedience to Thee.

Lord, hear our prayer.

And as the temptations that assail us are so different, and as each of us has to face his own special temptations, may we learn to pray this prayer for ourselves whenever we are tempted:

O Lord my God, Thou wilt not suffer me to be tempted beyond my strength, if I but look to Thee. Teach me to look to Thee every day. Keep me this day in the light of Thy presence. Make Thy glory so real to me that temptation will lose its power. And bind my heart to Thee, that I may never forsake or betray Thee, but may be as Thou wouldst have me be, brave and clean and kind. Be Thou, O God, my strength. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. AMEN.

RESPONSIBILITY

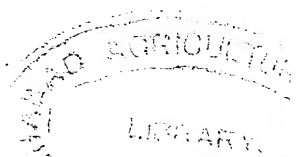
Sometimes one hears people say that it is not in your power or mine to choose between good and evil. That means that we cannot help acting as we do. If we do good it is no credit to us to do it, and if we do wrong we are not to be blamed for it. If that were true, it would take all moral meaning out of our lives. If we are not free to act in one way rather than another, we cannot be held responsible for our actions. Responsibility means freedom to do what is right. If we know that we are responsible persons, we also know that it all depends on us what we make of our lives. That is a great incentive to us to do everything we can to culti-

vate strength of character. It makes us take our lives seriously and it gives us a strong sense of duty. If we have no such sense of responsibility, we do not care how we act. We don't think that it makes any difference what we do. In that case we could not be expected to have any desire to have a strong character or to resist temptation.

Now all through the Bible, it is assumed that man is a free moral agent, that he is a responsible being. He can resist evil and he can make up his mind to do what is right. He is responsible to God, for God has given him the strange gift of moral freedom. That, of course, implies that man has the dreadful power to say 'no' to God and can, if he wills to do it, resist His grace. Responsibility always confers privilege, but it also involves danger. Man's personal responsibility is specially emphasised in the Book of Ezekiel. Here is a passage where it is described very clearly, 'The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him' (*Ezekiel* 18: 20). And St. Paul teaches the same thing in these words, 'Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God' (*Romans* 14: 12). Man is responsible to God for the use he makes of his life. He can, of course, receive God's help, His grace, in his struggle with evil, but he must desire it, he must ask for it. As Jesus said, 'How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him'.

But man's responsibility to God is best explained in a story which Jesus told (*Matthew* 25: 14-29). The story is simply told and is easy to understand. But let me draw your attention to some points in it that seem to me important:

1. The master went far away and he stayed away a



long time. Thus the servants were given complete freedom in the use of what their master had entrusted to them. While the master was away everything depended upon the character of the men he had left behind to manage his affairs. That makes it very clear to us that the more responsibility we are given, the greater is the freedom given to us to act in our own way.

2. All the servants were given responsibility but they were not all given the same degree of responsibility. The man to whom a great deal was entrusted obviously bore a heavier responsibility than the others. It is necessary to remember this for we have to specially notice that the master judged each servant according to the degree of responsibility that had been given him.

3. The responsibility and freedom given to the three men revealed great differences between them. Two of them showed that they deserved the trust that their master had put in them. Responsibility roused them to greater effort than they had ever put forth before. They acted in a most energetic and enterprising way. Their master was an exacting man, no doubt. But he had put complete trust in them. They were thus specially anxious to win his approval, and they knew he would be glad to give it them if they deserved it. They threw themselves whole-heartedly into their work and had a most exciting time of it while their master was away.

But the third man was most unhappy. He may have been a satisfactory enough servant so long as he was told just what to do and how to do it. But responsibility unnerved him. Instead of encouraging him, as it did the others, it paralysed him. He had a subordinate's mind and was quite unfitted for responsibility and freedom. He did not dare to do anything for fear he

might make mistakes. So the freedom given to him by his master was of no use to him. Instead of doing his best he grumbled that he had a hard master.

4. When the master returned after giving his men ample opportunity of showing what was in them, the test by which he judged their trustworthiness was whether they had done their best. He did not expect impossibilities from any of them. He was entirely satisfied with the second man though he did not achieve as much as the first man. He had done his best. That was all that could be expected of him. What the master condemned in the third man was that he had made no effort at all. He had not responded to the trust he had put in him. The defence the man made seemed to him unreal and false. He would not have been so angry if the man had made mistakes. But he had not done anything at all. That was unpardonable. And of course his responsibility was given to the man who had shown himself best able to bear responsibility.

The story teaches us that we should be thankful that God has given us responsibility. That gift makes life exciting and full of meaning. It should inspire us to do our best. That is what God expects of us and he will be satisfied with nothing less. As one of our Christian hymns puts it:

‘To duty firm, to conscience true,
However tried and pressed,
In God’s clear sight high work we do,
If we but do our best.’

Let us pray

O God, the Protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase

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and multiply upon us Thy mercy; that Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal.

WITHOUT THEE, O GOD, 'NOTHING IS STRONG'—

We would be strong in character, strong to decide, strong to persevere. Without Thy help we cannot be what we desire to be. Do Thou in Thy grace add Thy strength to our desire that so we may prevail.

WITHOUT THEE, O GOD, 'NOTHING IS HOLY'—

We would be true and righteous and good. Without Thee we cannot be what we should be. Do Thou, O God, impart to us Thy Spirit of holiness that we may grow in holiness as Thou art holy.

'THOU BEING OUR RULER AND GUIDE'

Almighty God, Thou hast authority over us. To Thee we are responsible. Deepen within us, we beseech Thee, our sense of duty to Thee. May it not weigh us down but may it raise us up. In our conflict with evil may it steady and help us. Teach us, O Lord, that Thou art Guide as well as Ruler, that Thy rule loyally accepted will set our feet on the path of life, and that in Thy wisdom Thou wilt guide us in the way everlasting.

Gracious God, who hast given unto us the strange gift of freedom, teach us how precious Thy gift to us is.

For the power to choose between good and evil,
We thank Thee.

For the discipline of choice and for the strength that
comes from the exercise of it,
We thank Thee.

For the meaning that freedom gives to our lives,
We thank Thee.

For the opportunity and inspiration Thy gift gives us,
We thank Thee.

O Thou who hast laid on us the burden of responsibility, help us to bear it worthily—

From carelessness in the use we make of life,
Deliver us, O Lord.

From forgetfulness of Thee and our duty to Thee,
Deliver us, O Lord.

From misunderstanding of Thy purpose in making us responsible,
Deliver us, O Lord.

From every evasion of responsibility,
Deliver us, O Lord.

O God who hast made us and given us our lives to live for thee, may we find joy in doing what pleases Thee and may no fear of Thee ever make us shrink from the tasks Thou dost entrust to us. Give us grace that we may never be content to avoid doing what is evil, but may earnestly desire to do what is good. Make us, we beseech Thee, more eager and zealous to serve than fearful and afraid of failure. Teach us that it is joy to Thee to commend us for fidelity and that Thou hast no pleasure in condemning our unfaithfulness. Teach us too, O God, that though Thou dost give us so much freedom in the conduct of life Thou wilt call us to account for the way we use it. Grant, we pray Thee, that we may so live our lives that when Thou

dost reckon up the good and ill that we have done we may hear Thy blessed words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord'.

Remember, O Lord, what Thou hast wrought in us and not what we deserve; and, as Thou hast called us to Thy service, make us worthy of our calling.

AMEN.

WORK

In all the talks in this section on life we are thinking of character and the making of character. Here is a sentence from a book written by one from whom I have learned a great deal, 'No man will grow either in capacity or in character unless he has something to do'. It means that a man cannot be either good or useful if he has no work to do. Man was made by God to work. If he won't work, or has not got work, he cannot make anything of life. It is not to be expected that everyone will have the work to do that he would naturally choose. The great majority of people have to earn their daily bread by hard, weary toil. Those who are able to choose their work in life are a favoured few. But even they very soon discover that there is a great deal of drudgery even in the work that they have chosen. You sometimes hear people speak as if no one should have to do anything that he does not want to do. But that is ridiculous. The sooner a young man learns that he will have to do what he does not want to do, the better it is for him. This simply means that work is invariably, to some extent at any rate, discipline. We ought to work because the discipline of it is good for us. But it is not enough to think of work as only discipline, which we must put up with whether we like

it or not. Discipline enters into all work and it teaches us duty and obedience. But that is not enough. What we need is a way of looking at work which will call out from us what we have to give. There must be a good deal more in work than mere discipline, if it is to rouse us to put ourselves into it.

I think that the way we look at our work depends on what we get out of it and what we put into it. There is a well known story which tells us of the different ways in which people look at their work. When St. Paul's Cathedral in London was being built the famous architect of the great building, Sir Christopher Wren, went one day to see the men at their work. 'What are you doing?' he asked one of the men. 'Oh, I am carrying stones,' was the man's reply. To the same question another man answered, 'I am earning my livelihood.' Later on he asked a third man the same question and the man replied, 'I am helping Sir Christopher Wren to build St. Paul's.' Look at the answer of the first man. He could not see that he was getting anything out of his work at all. He found no satisfaction in it whatsoever. It was a burden imposed upon him. He saw no meaning in it. He could not see that the hard work he had to do was a necessary part of something far greater. In his eyes it was simply hard work, carrying stones. That being so, one may be sure that he was not working any harder than he was compelled to work. He was doing no more than he had to do. He was not putting himself into it at all. The second man got an honest livelihood out of his work, and with that he got self-respect and the many satisfactions that go along with it—pleasure in being useful and the joy of providing for others. He understood the dignity of work, though what he was doing was only a small part of all that had to be

done to build the great Cathedral. That great truth that there is a dignity about the humblest toil should be specially clear to Christians, for the One whom they reverence, Jesus of Nazareth, was a carpenter. He made doors for houses and wheels for carts and yokes and ploughs. It was hard manual work; and just because He worked like that, every kind of work should have a greater value in a Christian's eyes. The second man in the story valued his work, and for that reason one may be sure he put his heart and strength into it. But look at what the third man found in his work. It was to him his chance of working with a great man to create a splendid sacred building. How eagerly and devotedly would he do his work! He could not understand all the great architect's plans, but he admired his genius and wanted to do all he could to help him. One may be sure he put his soul into his work. The man's reply to Sir Christopher Wren reminds one of the words used by the Apostle Paul, 'We are workers together with God' (1 *Corinthians* 3: 9). That is the most wonderful thing that was ever said about work, that it is a way of helping God in His unending gracious work. The man in the story took pride in helping Sir Christopher Wren to build his Cathedral. To think that we can help God, that would give our work its greatest meaning. If we could think of work in that way, what joy we should get out of it and how completely would we put our whole selves into it! Helping God! That is what all work should be.

'Teach me, my God and King;
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee!

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, 'for Thy sake',
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.'

Let us pray

O God, our Creator, we worship Thee as the Master Workman. In Thy eternal mind Thou dost cherish the perfect pattern of what should be; into all Thy handiwork Thou hast put Thy power and glory. Thou dost create beauty and impart life. In all the work of Thy hands Thou art revealed. Thy wisdom and Thy power are infinite. How can it be that for the perfecting of Thy creation Thou dost ask for wise and willing work from us? Yet hast Thou called us to be fellow workers with Thee, teaching us Thy plans and putting tools into our hands. Receive our humble thanks, O Lord—

That in all we do we have Thee to work for,
That our work, however lowly it be, is part of
a greater plan,
That all true work is an offering no less pleasing to
Thee than heartfelt prayer,
That 'Work may be prayer, if all be wrought as
Thou wouldst have it done',

We thank Thee, O Lord.

Merciful God, who hast given us work to increase the worth of life, and who dost work through human

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lives, forgive us for finding so little joy in work, for working only for our advantage; forgive us that we become so immersed in the drudgery of our work that we do not look beyond it to Thee who hast given it to us to do for Thee; that we are so negligent and half-hearted in the doing of it.

Forgive us, O Lord.

Living Lord of all men, who hast ordained that each must work, and that all should enjoy the fruits of their own and others' labours, hear us as we pray for all engaged in every kind of work that ministers to the well-being of their fellowmen.

For farmers and miners who by their toil win from the earth its fruits and riches,

For all factory workers and craftsmen,

For all who carry the produce of the earth and the work of men's hands across land and sea,

For the traders and the merchants who distribute what men need,

For doctors and nurses in their healing work,

For all who discover knowledge and impart it,

For rulers in their manifold responsibilities,

And for all others who share in the work of the world that receiving due reward for their labour they may work for more than reward, doing service unto Thee and not unto men.

Lord, hear our prayer.

O Lord, who dost receive gifts from men, receive, we pray Thee, the offering of our work which we now make unto Thee. We offer it to Thee—

As a small return for all that others have done for us,

As a promise that we will do it more diligently and more faithfully,
And as a tribute of love to Thee,
That doing it for love of Thee we may find it to be a vocation from Thee and a joyful service rendered to Thee.

Lord, receive us, we beseech Thee.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

AMEN.

LEISURE

We have seen that a man's character is revealed by the way he does his work. But perhaps what he really is is more evident in the use he makes of his leisure, when he hasn't to work. In normal times people have a good deal of leisure. They have more than they used to have, and in all probability they will have still more of it in days to come. In this mechanical age work has become very intense and often very monotonous. People are more in need of leisure. It gives them the freedom they need in which they can be themselves. Leisure is a part of life just as much as work is. Life is one, made up of both work and leisure, and we have to find out how to live our lives as they ought to be lived, to make the most of work and leisure too. Leisure is time put at our disposal in which we are free to do what we like. Time in itself is meaningless. It may be a mere succession of hours and days that has no value. Days of weary toil may be like that, but still more so may leisure be, if it is wasted in idleness. I have recently

read a most interesting book written by a woman who was kept in prison in occupied France. She explains how heavily time hung upon her hands and how hard it was to endure the aimlessness of it. 'This is part of what she says, 'Time, how I hate you! Nothing to do and all day and night in which to do it. Time! there are moments of you that I have thoroughly enjoyed, but you are not a good companion by yourself.' How true that is of time! It is not a good companion by itself. That is to say, we must have more than time, more than leisure. We must be able to fill it full of interest.

This means that we must not spend our leisure in mere idleness. Stevenson wrote an essay called *An Apology for Idlers*. The title makes one think that he was defending people who do nothing. But that is not so. What he did plead for was that we should not spend all our time toiling for success. He drew a very unflattering picture of the man who has no interests outside his work. His plea was that we should cultivate a variety of human interests. In his opinion that was the secret of a happy life. In another essay he wrote, 'It is always better policy to learn an interest than to make a thousand pounds. The money will soon be spent, or you may feel no joy in spending. But the interest remains imperishable and ever new.' So what he was really pleading for was a wise use of leisure.

It is a good education that teaches us how to make the best use of our leisure. We expect that education should teach us how to work, and of course it should do that. But it is even more important that it should teach us how to spend our leisure. Education should quicken and direct to creative ends our natural tastes and inclinations. A man for whom education has done

that will always be able to make good use of his leisure. What interests should we cultivate so that time by itself will not be our only companion? There are, for instance, all the pleasures of the open air, so healthy and so liberating, the beauty of natural scenery and all the ways there are of seeing it. There are the joys of reading, so boundless in scope in these days of good literature at popular prices. Then if one has any skill in one of the arts how much it adds to life to use it. What infinite pleasure the amateur musician or painter gets out of the practice of their aptitude! And we get all the more pleasure out of interests such as these if we share them with others and thus make and keep friendships. These are only a few of the manifold interests with which we can fill our leisure hours. They will all serve to enrich life, making us all the better able for our work as well as adding to our happiness. Enrichment of life, that should be our aim. That is at least part of what Jesus meant when He said, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (*Matthew* 6: 19, 20, 21). The Treasure in heaven cannot be lost, and it cannot be taken from us. It has entered into us and become part of ourselves. As Dr. Johnson with characteristic wisdom said, 'It is better to live rich, than to die rich'. We must learn to see life whole, to see it as made up of work and leisure. We must work, as we have seen, in a spirit of dedication, and we must spend our leisure in the same spirit. And it is probably in periods of respite from work, in quiet leisure, that we see the true aim of life most clearly. As Rabindranath Tagore says so beautifully, 'Away from the sight of Thy face my work becomes an endless toil in a

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shoreless sea of toil. Now it is time to sit quiet, face to face with Thee, and to sing dedication of life in this silent and overflowing leisure.' That is said most beautifully, but this out of the Bible means the same thing and it is simpler: 'Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him' (*Colossians* 3: 17).

Let us pray

Thou, O God, art the Author of our life and by Thy wisdom is it fashioned. Varied though the parts of it may be, yet is our life one, and the secret of it all is in Thee. Give us grace to offer it all to Thee that Thou mayst bless it all.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Almighty God, Who hast in mercy ordained that we are given respite from our work, we thank Thee, that in our lives there is leisure as well as work. We thank Thee that they are so different the one from the other. Grant that we may use each of them in the right way; that we may not work in the spirit in which we should spend our leisure, nor use our days of leisure pre-occupied by our work. By faithful work may we enjoy our leisure and may leisure well spent make us the better able for our work.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we thank Thee that our work claims so much of us and that it can absorb so much of our attention and effort. Yet in the press of work save us, we beseech Thee, from forgetting Thee or from giving Thee too small a place in our busy lives. In quiet days when the strain of work is relaxed may we come face to

face with Thee and learn anew the great secret, to dedicate all our life to Thee.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the freedom of leisure,

We thank Thee, O God.

Though no rules are imposed upon us in our use of it, may we have the wisdom to make rules for ourselves in the way we spend it.

For the gift of time which we can use as we will,

We thank Thee, O God.

May time as it passes be no aimless succession of hours and days. Rather may it be filled full of meaning and of value.

For the pleasures of recreation,

We thank Thee, O God.

Save us, we pray Thee, from desiring any pleasure that does harm to others.

Gracious God, we thank Thee for all that enriches our lives,

For the beauty of the world and its health-giving power.

Forgive us, Lord, the ugly lives we live.

For the exercise of the body and all expenditure of energy in healthful ways.

Forgive us, Lord, the sluggish lives we live.

For the interests of the mind, and all the many ways whereby they are awakened and satisfied.

Forgive us, Lord, the thoughtless lives we live.

For the gift of friendship and its wondrous power to enhance every pleasure.

Forgive us, Lord, the friendless lives we live.

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Let us conclude our prayers with the words of a hymn that is sung in English schools at the beginning of a vacation:

'Bless Thou all our days of leisure;
Help us selfish lures to flee;
Sanctify our every pleasure,
Pure and blameless may it be;
May our gladness
Draw us evermore to Thee.'

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. AMEN.

HOME

In an address upon 'the Home' a former teacher of mine told this story about himself. He was doing a crossword puzzle. When he began it he noticed that one of the clues was, 'What makes a home,' and the word had to be one of nine letters. He thought the answer must be 'affection' and immediately wrote it in as the correct answer. Later on when he had done more of the puzzle he was surprised to discover that the right word was 'furniture' and not 'affection'! But in spite of the crossword puzzle it is true that it is 'affection' and not 'furniture' that makes a home. Let us think a little of this affection that makes a home.

1. It is the affection of husband and wife, of a man and a woman. That is to say, it has to do with a natural instinct, the instinct of sex. Instincts are strange things. They have physical causes and express themselves in physical ways. And yet they have moral and spiritual significance too. When they find their true and right

expression they grow into the finest virtues. Instincts are not in themselves bad. They may lead to immorality, but immorality is the misuse of a good thing rather than indulgence in what is bad. Then again instincts are incredibly strong. They can be guided into right channels, but they cannot be simply repressed. If you try to do that to them, they will always assert themselves in perverted and unnatural ways that cause great distress. What you have to do with instincts is to find the right outlet for them. The right use of them brings joy. The wrong use of them always causes unhappiness. The instinct of sex should find its fulfilment in married love. It is worth everything to a man or woman to keep that instinct undefiled in order that marriage and home may be beautiful and happy as God intended them to be.

2. Married love is also a moral and personal relationship. It is very much more than physical and instinctive attraction that brings husband and wife together. Rather is it their appreciation of one another's characters. Their love for one another is awakened by their personal qualities. That is why married love is the lasting thing it ought to be. If affection never gets beyond the instinctive level, if it is not truly personal, it won't last long enough to make a real home; for the making of a true home takes time. It is one of the precious things that has limitless possibilities, and they cannot be realised in a short space of time. Mr. John Macmurray, a distinguished English writer on social problems, has recently said some very suggestive things about personal relationships. He distinguishes between two parts of our life, the functional and the personal. The functional covers all that is connected with our work and the place we hold in the economic order. The personal has to do

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with those moral values that give meaning to life and make it worth living. He emphasises that the personal is the most precious part of life, that the work we do and the way we earn our livelihood have worth in so far as they increase those personal values on which our true happiness depends. He sees in the home the centre of our personal life. This is the way he puts it, 'It is in the home that the functional life is transformed into a personal life'. That may seem difficult to understand. The meaning of it is expressed much more beautifully and more simply in a famous picture by a French artist. It is a picture of a peasant and his wife standing in a field at the end of a day's hard work, as the sun is setting, with heads bowed in worship as they hear the Church Bells ring. The utter simplicity of it is beautiful. That is life as it should be, made up of work and love and worship. Work and love, they must go together—the functional and the personal—but the personal is far the more important; love is supreme. It is love that makes work happy; it is love that makes persons of us and it is in the home that love is learnt.

'Is there on earth a spot so fair,
As can with that true home compare,
Where every thought of 'mine' and 'me'
Is swallowed up, nor shall you see
One speck of selfish coveting,
For love is crowned eternal king.'

Narayan Waman Tilak.

3. When I referred to the picture by the French artist I mentioned that the peasant and his wife are standing with their heads bent in worship. What does that add to the meaning of the picture? Why does the atmosphere of religion suffuse it? Surely it teaches us

that all personal values, of which the greatest of all is love, have to be kept alive and pure by religion. That is why religion and the home are so intimately connected. To return again to that distinction between the functional and the personal in our lives; it is the state that controls our functional life, but it is religion that inspires all those moral values that make up our personal life. Just because the home is made to be the centre of our personal life the spirit of religion must abide in it. There is a passage in the New Testament (*Ephesians* 3: 14, 15) which brings this out very clearly. The Apostle Paul is speaking and he says, 'I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name and nature'. Every family, every home, exists by the Will of God. His nature is love and the home, which is the place where love is learnt, reveals His nature. Therefore every home is sacred. What is sacred demands of us our very best. To our homes we must give all that is best in us, our service and our love. And when we try to put into words our hopes for mankind we speak in terms of family life, we speak of God as the Father of all, of humanity as the family of God and of ourselves as brethren one of another. We cannot know what heaven is like, but surely we are nearest to the truth about it when we think of it as home. The end of man's strange pilgrimage is 'an eternal home'.

'O God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.'

Let us pray

O God, our Creator, we bless Thee for all the ways by which Thou hast made us members one of another, whereby we may learn to be unselfish and helpful. Specially do we thank Thee for homes and families that teach us to enjoy the happiness of life and to fulfil its duties. Fill our hearts with thanksgiving as we remember Thy gracious purpose whereby Thou dost join life to life in the fellowship of the family.

For that Thou hast made us male and female, and for marriage which Thou hast ordained to guard and hallow the relations of men and women,

We thank Thee, O God.

For our homes in which we first learnt what love means,

We thank Thee, O God.

For a mother's love and tenderness, for a father's guidance and strength, for the comradeship of brothers and sisters,

We thank Thee, O God.

For the common life of the home that teaches us to think of others rather than ourselves,

We thank Thee, O God.

For the rivalries of the home that are kept wholesome by loyalty,

We thank Thee, O God.

For the lastingness of true love that keeps families together and for the increase of joy the longer love lasts,

We thank Thee, O God.

For our homes from which we go forth to our work
and to which we return,

We thank Thee, O God.

For the little world of home which prepares us to
take our place in the bigger world outside it,

We thank Thee, O God.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, be with us in our home life. Make us to be loving and patient, forgiving others, as we remember how much we ourselves need to be forgiven. Keep us from all want of thoughtfulness for others in little things. Make us more ready to give than to receive: and grant that in our homes the holy law of love may reign. By the love of home may the generations be bound together in trust and faith, that the old may not lose the confidence of the young, and that the young may learn from the experience of the old.

Merciful God, forgive us for all our transgressions against the laws of the home, and incline our hearts to keep them more faithfully.

The law of purity,

*Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts
to keep this law.*

The law of obedience,

*Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts
to keep this law.*

The law of helpfulness,

*Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts
to keep this law.*

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The law of thrift,

*Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts
to keep this law.*

The law of love in the keeping of which all other
laws are kept,

*Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts
to keep this law.*

O Thou who art the Father of all look in mercy on all homeless persons who have none to care for them, who live alone or are embittered, on all who have been deserted by others, on all who have rebelled against society and on all whose homes have been broken, that in their outcaste state Thy love may find them and restore them to Thee and to their brethren.

Almighty God, by the revelation of Thyself as the Father of all, teach all men everywhere that they are brethren one of another, that thus the brotherhood of man may be fulfilled by faith in Thy universal Fatherhood. We pray Thee that the spirit of every true home may overflow into all life's manifold relationships. By increase of trust and loyalty among men, may the whole wide world become a home. Thus do Thou prepare us to enter through the gate of death into Thy eternal home, where all is as it should be in peace and love for ever.

The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God.

AMEN.

CITIZENSHIP

We have seen that we have a duty to our homes. But we have a duty to society too. We are citizens as well as members of families. Love of home is good, but it is better when the love that is learnt in a home

reaches out beyond it in the desire that the homes of others may be happy too. Love does not remain love if it is limited to only a few. It must be given to many if it is to be precious to any. By His example Jesus made that evident. There are many indications that He loved His home intensely. But once when He was engaged in teaching the people, someone came and told Him that His mother and His brethren were asking for Him. He made the striking reply, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother' (*Matthew* 12: 50). He meant by those words, that He belonged to a greater family than the family that lived in His home. Thus did He teach us that we have duties to others besides those who are related to us by the ties of family. The same truth is suggested by certain lines in the best known of all Rabindranath Tagore's prose poems that have been translated into English. Here is the whole poem. What a splendid prayer for true citizenship it is!

'Where the mind is without fear and the head is
held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into frag-
ments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms toward
perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-
widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my
country awake.'

Notice specially two lines in the poem. First, 'Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls.' The poet uses the words 'narrow domestic walls' to describe society's greatest danger. The danger is that citizens may use freedom to further sectional interests rather than to seek the good of all. Then again look at the second last line 'Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action'. It would be a heaven of freedom indeed if each citizen used it as an opportunity to show wider sympathy and more disinterested service.

What is needed for good citizenship is obviously a keener sense of corporate responsibility. Society is made up of individuals. Their lives are bound up together. What a person does, what he is, may have a far greater effect on others than he thinks. Thus the good of all is not to be gained by each individual seeking his separate good; and the good of each one will be best realized when the well-being of all is sought by each. The days of individualism are numbered. The needs of society cry out for a collective conscience. All sectional interests are suicidal. We are members one of another. This truth has often been taught by comparing society to the body made up of different parts, all related to one another by the life that animates them all. That was the theme of a very eloquent plea for civic unity at a great crisis in Roman history. In the New Testament too, St. Paul made use of the same analogy to enforce the doctrine of social responsibility. This is what he wrote: 'The body is one and hath many members and all the members of the body, being many, are one body' (1 *Corinthians* 12: 12). The meaning is of course that the community though it is made up of separate individuals is a unity. Then he goes on to explain

what destroys that unity. 'If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body. And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eyes, I am not of the body,' the body would cease to function as a whole. As applied to society what do those words mean, 'I am not of the body'? They mean that the individual without a collective conscience may say, 'I am not responsible for others'. 'I am not responsible, and therefore I am not to blame.' How often we find ourselves saying that! Or again, 'The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you'. The parts of the body cannot say that to one another. But man with his freedom says it and acts on it only too often, 'I have no need of you'. 'I am independent of others; I can live my own life. It does not matter to others how I act.' By what he wrote, St. Paul wanted to make it clear that such a claim to be independent of others is unnatural, destructive of what ought to be. Irresponsibility and the claim to personal independence are the cause of all anti-social wrongs. Likewise a keen sense of responsibility for others and a strong feeling that one's interests are identical with theirs are the cause of all good citizenship.

But it may be argued that it is not enough to say that all the good citizen needs is a keen sense of social responsibility. The duties of the citizen are manifold and the problems of social life become more and more complicated. So he is tempted to say, 'Give me more detailed guidance as to my civic duties. Tell me what I ought to do and how I am to do it.' But anyone who asks to be told exactly what to do and how to do it proves himself irresponsible, and the irresponsible person is never a conscientious person. The man who

asks for rules to keep is usually the man who won't keep them when they are given him. Responsibility, on the other hand, is educative. The more faithfully we discharge our responsibilities the more quickly we learn what has to be done. The person who relies on his sense of responsibility will know how to make rules for himself, and we are far more likely to keep such rules than the rules that are imposed upon us by others. So that in this matter of good citizenship one must ultimately depend upon a high standard of civic responsibility.

We have seen that what we need as citizens is to desire the good of all and to cultivate a sense of social responsibility. Religious faith widens the one and deepens the other. In one of his letters to people who were very proud of their citizenship in the Roman Empire, St. Paul wrote these startling words: 'Our citizenship is in Heaven.'

There are two countries to which the good citizen belongs. There is the earthly country which he loves and serves and there is the heavenly country, so different from all the kingdoms of the world and yet the ideal of them all. It is by an unconditional allegiance to the Invisible King of the heavenly kingdom that we become good citizens of our motherland here below.

Let us pray

Almighty God, who hast set Thy children in communities and nations, and hast ordained that there shall be differences between people and people, order the life of all men, we pray Thee, that differences may not divide but enrich. May the differing gifts and attainments of the peoples be all dedicated to Thee, that being used for Thy glory they may become a blessing

to all. We thank Thee, O Lord, for all that is good in our social and national life. Teach us to value it aright, lest, by our pride in it, it be perverted to what is bad or hinder us from seeking what is better.

For our national heritage, that our pride in it may not be shown by contempt of others,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

For the distinctive traditions of our land, that we may not slavishly follow them but be inspired by the living spirit that created them,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

For the public peace that prevails in our midst, that the maintenance of order may not become oppression,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

For the growing indignation against public wrongs, that it may not lead to civil strife,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

For the release of energy that freedom brings, that it may be used for the good of all, and not for the advantage of some,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

For the increase in social sympathy, that its good effects may not be hindered by sectional interests or class strife,
Accept our thanks and hear our prayer, O Lord.

Thou righteous Lord of all, we confess before Thee our sins as a people and the share we each of us have in them:

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The sin of irresponsibility whereby we blame others for what is wrong and make no effort to set it right ourselves.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

The sin of indifference, so near to cruelty, that makes us care little for suffering that does not touch us.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

The sin of a competitive and acquisitive spirit that shrinks not to cause hurt to others that we may gain what we want.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

The sin of worldliness whereby we are satisfied with comfort and think too little of justice and mercy.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

The sin of contentment with low standards of public morality and our unwillingness to face unpopularity by trying to raise them.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

The sin of cherishing no ideals for our people and country.

Lord, cleanse us each and all.

Give us, merciful God, such true repentance for these our sins that turning from them we may not be conformed to the prevailing spirit, but may be used by Thee to transform our social life into something better and more acceptable to Thee.

O God whose Kingdom ruleth over all, in obedience to Thy wise laws is no restraint and in submission to Thee there is no dishonour. Make us citizens of Thy unseen and glorious Kingdom, that we may be better citizens of the land in which Thou hast given us our place.

May we all live and die in the faith of those who seek the city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. AMEN.

THE SERVICE OF MAN AND THE SERVICE OF GOD

I had thought of speaking about the service of Man in one address and about the service of God in another. But I found it very difficult to speak of them separately. The more I thought of the two kinds of service the more I was led to think that the best service of God is the service of man, and the best service of man is the service of God. If that be so, then each form of service depends upon the other. That is why I have had to speak of them together.

There is a very well-known book on Communism which argues that the new social system in Russia amounts to a new civilisation. According to the authors of the book, the Russian system is based upon the elimination of the profit motive and upon the conviction that science and its application is all that is needed for human well-being. As they say in a memorable sentence, 'The worship of God is replaced by the service of man'. The sentence suggests that the service of man is a great improvement on the worship of God, that they are alternatives, between which you have to choose, and that they do not naturally go together. As I have said that seems to me a wrong attitude to take. They are not opposed to one another as is suggested, but the service of man is the natural expression of the worship of God, and the worship of God makes the service of man far more effective than it could be without it.

Let us see what is the result of divorcing the service of God from the service of man. If there is no sense of obligation to God in the service of man, how is man served?

First, the service rendered him is impersonal when it ought to be personal. Men ought to be served as individuals each of whom has a value in himself and for himself. But the service of man that is uninspired by religious faith is service rendered to collective man, to men in the mass. The service of man which the authors of that book on Communism speak of is service organised by the State, and whatever the State does for the benefit of its citizens is done impersonally. The aim of it is the strength and power of the State, rather than the personal good of each individual.

Secondly, it is service for the sake of justice, not for the sake of love. In saying this one must not minimise the greatness and the value of everything that is done to establish a juster social order. To put an end to social injustice and wrong is necessary and right. But service for the sake of justice has to be supplemented by service for the sake of love. The State can do the one kind of service. Only a religious man or woman is equal to the other—service for love's sake.

Thirdly, if the service of man is unrelated to the service of God men will be served as if they only needed what would satisfy physical needs. The service of man in a secular spirit is rendered on the assumption that man needs nothing more than food and health and amusement. Men do indeed need these things, and it is good and right that they be given them. But they need far more than these things. They need sympathy and friendship and love. It is only people who are religious that can share these things with them—people

who serve them for their own sake and for God's sake too.

Jesus is the supreme example of the service of God that took the form of unwearied service of man, and of the service of man that did marvellous things for him just because it was the service of God as well. God's love for man filled His heart, and He gave the whole of Himself for love's sake in the service of man. In Him love for God and love of man were inseparable. But Jesus said that the love of God came first and was more important than the other. On one occasion He was asked, 'Which is the great commandment of the religious law?' He replied, 'Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment'. But He immediately went on to say, 'And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (*Matthew 22: 36-39*). That is to say, the second grew naturally out of the first, and the first gave the second its force and content. There is another very beautiful passage (*Matthew 25: 31-46*) in His teaching which tells us how He thought man should be served. In a very vivid dramatic way He described Himself as the heavenly judge of all men. By what standard would He judge them, and how would He reckon up the good and ill they had done? The standard would be the service of man, and all would depend on whether they had fed the hungry, given water to the thirsty, whether they had clothed the naked, comforted the sick and cared for those in bondage. The service of others that would be required of them would be simple and lowly service, 'little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love'. How personal is the description of all the good deeds the righteous had

done! The service so well pleasing in His eyes would be service that might have been given Him. How reverently and tenderly would a kind act be done to Him! With the same reverence for others and tenderness for their need must they be served. That is the way man should be served. That is the service that touches the heart—lowly service done from the highest motive. 'In-as-much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' The service that is done from the highest motive, the service of God, is the service that stoops the lowest and is prized the most.

In this connection too we should recall one clause in the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray which runs as follows, 'Our Father, which art in Heaven, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven' (*Matthew* 6: 9, 10). Here again there is the insistence so characteristic of Jesus on the primacy of a heavenly and eternal good. The will of the Heavenly Father is what ought to be. In Heaven it is an abiding reality. On earth it must be realised at the cost of pain and suffering. But the good that ought to be cannot be accomplished on earth by those who do not believe in Heaven and in what is eternally true. It can only be achieved by those who believe in a divine and eternal good for man, and who serve him as a being who can and ought to share in it. Just because man is not a mere creature of flesh and blood, but is a spiritual being, he will best be served by those who acknowledge the source of his being in God and who serve him for God's sake. Thus will man be served both for the sake of justice and for love's sake too—for the common good in the interest of social justice and as an individual for his own personal good.

Let us pray

Before we put our prayers into words let us think for a moment about service. We all know that we should not serve ourselves and our interests. Most of us feel under obligation to serve our fellowmen. We like to think that the service of man is the essence of religion. But that is not so. Let us remember that Jesus taught that the service of God comes before the service of man. The service of God is the highest aim and the highest motive we can have. We need such a transcendent aim and motive if we are to serve man as he should be served. Therefore in our prayers let us think first of God's right to our service and then of the service of man that springs out of the service of God.

Almighty God, infinite in goodness and love, Thy right over us is unconditional, Thy claim upon us absolute. To obey Thee is our reasonable service, to serve Thee our evident duty. All that we are, the whole of us, is undividedly Thine; our hearts with all their affections, our minds with all their thoughts, our souls with all the intimations of eternity that visit them, all belong of right to Thee. How great is the demand Thou dost make upon us that we love Thee unreservedly! We cannot fulfill it, but do Thou help us, O God, to put Thee and Thy glory first in all our life and service.

May Thou be first in our hearts,
Lord teach us to pray this prayer.

May Thou be our best thought,
Lord, teach us to pray this prayer.

May all else save Thee be naught to us,
Lord, teach us to pray this prayer.

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Merciful God, we confess that we do not love and serve Thee as Thou deservest. Forgive us, we beseech Thee, for the many ways in which we break Thy 'first and great commandment'.

For the love of the world which takes Thy place in our hearts,

Pardon us, O Lord.

For the love of ourselves which shows that the love of Thee is not in us,

Pardon us, O Lord.

For the love of earth's treasure and for the smallness of the treasure we have laid up in heaven,

Pardon us, O Lord.

Bless us, O God, with the vision of Thy Being and Beauty, that we may love Thee truly and fully, and do Thou set our hearts at liberty from the service of ourselves that Thy service and Thy glory may be the end and aim of our lives.

By loving Thee, O God, who lovest all, may we serve others for Thy sake. By loving Thee, whom we cannot see, may we love our brethren, whose need we can see so clearly. May our service for them be richer and more personal because we love them for their own sake and for Thy sake too.

Lord, help us, we beseech Thee,

To do justly and to love mercy which is what Thou requirest of us.

Lord, help us, we beseech Thee,

To take our share in defending the weak against the strong and in removing injustice.

Lord, help us, we beseech Thee,
To take an interest in individuals that we may help
them for love's sake.

Lord, help us, we beseech Thee,
To observe willingly all laws framed for the common
good and to serve our neighbour at personal
cost to ourselves.

Almighty God, who hast taught us to pray that Thy
will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven, may we
work for and live for that for which we pray. Reveal
to us and to all men Thy perfect will that is eternally
fulfilled in Heaven. Help us to make the everlasting
right prevail on earth.

Use us for Thy glory and the good of others, and
may our service of Thee be the best service of man and
may our service of man be Thy truest service.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men. AMEN.



IV

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

JOY

In a novel I have recently read it is said of one of the characters that her experience of life had given her 'an understanding that the things worth having in life are few, and easy to get, and not to be got by striving'. That sentence expresses the religious point of view. The secular worldly view of life is that we need a great many things to make life worth living, and that we can only get them by striving for them. Religion on the contrary assures us that the things worth having are few and are to be got in a different way than by striving for them. What are the few things that are so well worth having? In one of his epistles (*Galatians* 5: 22) St. Paul gives a list of what he calls 'the fruit of the Spirit'. The first three things on his list are 'love, joy, peace'. He mentions six other things too, but the others seem to be included in the first three. 'Love, joy, peace', with these few possessions of the soul life grows and abounds; without them it is worth but little. The things worth having are few, very few—only 'love, joy, peace'.

Notice that St. Paul calls these things 'fruit of the Spirit'. If the life of a tree or of the grain is as it ought to be, the tree will certainly bear fruit or an abundant harvest will be reaped. Similarly, if anyone has the Spirit of God, that spiritual something added to life that gives vitality and grace to a person, he or

she is bound to have love, joy, peace. That is to say, these few things that are so well worth having are given to us as part of a greater experience. What is that greater experience? It is what the New Testament describes as being 'filled with the Spirit'. That is to know God as a personal reality, to know Him as God within us as well as God above us and God among us. Along with that experience love and joy and peace come of themselves into our lives. And so we can call them 'gifts of the Spirit' as well as 'fruit of the Spirit'.

This helps us to understand what is meant by saying that the worthwhile things are not to be got by striving. Religion promises us gifts. It gives us what is so precious that we can never earn it or deserve it. The religious way of life rests upon the belief that the best things in life are given to us and not gained by us. That is what is meant by the words of Tukaram, 'Unexpectedly, without an effort, I have heard the eternal secret'. That is religion, the enjoyment of a gift beyond all price, a gift that is in a sense 'easy to get and is not to be got by striving', a gift that comes into life mysteriously and unexpectedly, that is ours 'without an effort', a gift undeserved and gracious. We read in the Gospel that Jesus one day met a very unhappy woman, who had come to draw water from a well near which He was resting. No doubt by bitter experience she had fallen into the worldly way of thinking that all the best things in life had to be earned, and that she need expect no gift of anything that was worth having. One of the first things that He said to her were these beautiful words, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, . . . thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water' (*John* 4: 10). By saying that to the woman Jesus wanted to turn her thoughts to the

religious point of view according to which God is by His nature a Giver, and all the things we value most are ours as gifts and not by our striving for them.

That belief renews and encourages us. Yet it is a strange thing that in our heart of hearts we prefer rewards to gifts. We have become so accustomed to the competitive ways that rule our ordinary life that we get into the habit of assuming that everything has to be worked for and deserved. Besides, it flatters our vanity to think that whatever we get is due to our own effort, that we have a right to it. Thus we think that the whole of life is governed by work and the rewards of work. But that is worldliness, the irreligious way of life, and it is false. The best things in life are not to be got by thinking of ourselves more than of anyone else, or by striving for them. Surely the truth is that we do not get them by aiming at them. Rather do they come into our lives mysteriously and wonderfully when we are not trying to get anything for ourselves. The most worthwhile things are 'not to be got by striving'.

Certainly that is true of joy. It is a commonplace of experience that if we seek happiness, we do not get it. Indeed the more eagerly we seek it for ourselves, the more it eludes us. The way to get it is to aim at something other than happiness, something greater than happiness; then to our surprise it comes to us when we are not trying to get it and when we least expect it. A great part of the delight of happiness is when it comes to us as a surprise. It would not be the joyous thing it is if it were in our power to decide when we would be happy and how happy we would be. Like Tukaram's great experience it comes 'unexpectedly' and without our making any effort to get it for ourselves. Joy is a gift to us. The best gifts are personal gifts, given by

a person and accompanied by that person's feeling for another. Joy is that kind of gift. It is shared, handed on by one person to another. Jesus said to His disciples, 'These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might be in you and that your joy might be full' (*John* 15: 11). Notice the words 'my joy', 'your joy'. How personal they are! The Lord's joy becomes the joy of His disciples. It was His gift to them; for what one person shares with another is a gift.

Are joy and the other things worth having in life 'easy to get'? In one sense they are, because we cannot earn them by any effort of ours. But in another sense they are not easy to get. We can only get them by sharing them with someone else. To do that we have to cast away our pride and be willing to be indebted. We never find that easy. We prefer to depend upon ourselves and to live for ourselves. But if we are humble enough to receive a gift that is in the power of another to give us, and if we are forgetful of ourselves, then joy and every other inward gift are 'easy to get'. The way to get it is to share in the joy of another and share the joy we have got in that way with others. If we do that then joy comes into our life as the accompaniment of what is greater than joy, and we see it to be the gift of the Spirit, a gift, 'not to be got by striving', 'easy to get'.

Let us pray

Heavenly Father, so gracious in all Thy giving, we thank Thee for joy that is Thy gift. We bless Thee that it springs up within us when we least expect it; that its coming is so simple and wonderful; that though we cannot earn it or gain it, it is yet our very own. When we seek it for ourselves it vanishes away, but

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when we receive it from Thee, O God, it is so fully
ours that it cannot be taken from us.

LORD, TEACH US THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS—

that we must desire it, but not strive for it;

Teach us, O Lord.

that in all our desire for it we must not think we can
ever keep it to ourselves;

Teach us, O Lord.

that it is but a part of the greater gift of Thy Spirit;

Teach us, O Lord.

that it is ours in greatest abundance when we are
near to Thee and are doing Thy will;

Teach us, O Lord.

that it is given to us as a personal gift by one who
has it in fullest measure;

Teach us, O Lord.

and as no one had it so fully as Jesus let us seek to
share His joy with Him.

Jesus, happy in the favour of man,
happiest in the love of God,

Give us Thy Joy.

Jesus, happy in Thyself,
making others happy,

Give us Thy Joy.

Jesus, happy in toil and labour,
delighting in meditation and rest,

Give us Thy Joy.

Jesus, happy in helping others,
glad to receive kindness from them,
Give us Thy joy.

Jesus, entering with joy into life here,
yet rejoicing in the joy set before Thee in the
Beyond,
Give us Thy joy.

O God of love, who hast so made us that we might
be glad and whose will it is that we should rejoice in
Thee and Thy gifts, we pray Thee to forgive our
joyless lives—

Our search for happiness where it cannot be found,
Lord forgive.

Our restless pursuit of it, our unwillingness to wait
for it,
Lord forgive.

Our seeking for it in many possessions, our ignorance
of the one thing needful,
Lord forgive.

Our love of what is artificial, our distaste for what is
simple,
Lord forgive.

Merciful God, forgive our foolish ways and our self-
centred lives. Teach us to value above all else what
Thou canst give us. Make us glad to be indebted to
Thee. Imitating Thy generosity may we share our joys
with others and thus increase them. We pray Thee to
cheer by Thy Presence all who are joyless and sad.
May we have the joy of brightening the lives of others

by shedding abroad among them the living spirit of gladness. Thus may we so live our lives that they will grow into fulness of joy in Thy Eternal Presence.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. AMEN.

PEACE

Peace is another of the things that are greatly worth having and that 'cannot be got by striving'. Peace and joy are closely connected in our experience. A happy person will also possess peace of mind. Though that is so, there is a difference between them. Joy is a more positive quality than peace. It consists in the presence in us of vitality and eagerness, while peace rather consists in the absence of fear and care. But in a world such as we are called upon to live in, this inward peace is very precious. Though there is this difference between peace and joy they are alike in this—that they are both gifts. We saw that joy was not to be had by aiming at it. In the same way peace cannot be got by striving for it. There used to be a very good advertisement for Pears Soap. It was a picture of a little boy in a bath. He was stretching out of the bath to try and get hold of a piece of Pears Soap. It was outside his reach and he was very miserable because he could not get it in spite of all his efforts. On the picture were written the words, 'he won't be happy till he gets it'. A great many people are like the little boy in the advertisement. They are trying to get the things they want in the wrong way,

and they are very unhappy. Peace of mind is one of those things. If we strive for peace we only increase our restlessness. Indeed the more we try for what cannot be got by trying, the more restless we become. It is not possible to work ourselves up into a peaceful state of mind. If we want peace we must get it as a gift from One who has got it to give.

On the last night of His life Jesus said two things about peace that are very enlightening. One was this: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (*John* 16: 33). He said that, remember, when He was looking forward to agony and death. That is to say He had peace in Himself though a storm of malice and cruelty was gathering against Him. That is the true peace, peace in the midst of conflict. That is greater peace than is to be found anywhere remote from strife and danger. Poets write about the kind of peace that is enjoyed in escape from the world and its tribulation. The most famous of recent Irish poets wrote a beautiful poem that begins like this:

'I will arise and go now and go to Innisfree.'

The poet imagines himself living alone in a beautiful valley amid the music of the bees. In solitude and in the midst of beauty the poet finds peace. 'And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow.' It is very beautiful, this picture of romantic peace, the peace of a poet's vision. But that kind of peace is too dependent on external circumstances, only to be obtained by escape from the world and its tragic conflicts. What Jesus calls 'My peace' is very different. His peace is peace of soul in the midst of storm and stress, the

peace of one who has peace in Himself in spite of the world, because He has mastered the world. That is the true peace that Jesus had, and because He had it in Himself He can share it as a gift with all who are bound to Him in spirit as to a living person.

The other thing He said about peace on that fateful night was this: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you' (*John* 14: 27). The world cannot give peace. It can give us nothing. It is too impersonal to give us anything. Only persons can give gifts. The best the world can do is to mete out rewards. It says to us, 'If you want my prizes you must strive for them, you must win from me what is in my power to give'. What we get from the world is a reward which we deserve. But we don't deserve a gift. Jesus specialises in giving us what we don't deserve, what we dare not claim. He gives us real gifts. He gives us joy and peace. The world cannot give them to us. They are 'not to be got by striving'. 'My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' How true are the words of Jesus!

Notice how emphatically He calls the peace He gives to others '*My* peace'. It is peace independent of outward circumstances, peace in the midst of storm and stress. It is also the peace of selflessness. It was the peace of Jesus as He made ready for utter sacrifice. The more we can forget ourselves the more peace we enjoy. I was recently reading a book on psychology in which that fact is brought out very clearly. The writer quoted a very famous psychotherapist. According to his analysis unrest of mind is caused when a person feels himself to be of no significance in the world. Instinctively he resists such a feeling.

In the wrong-headed way in which we human beings act he naturally tries to gain significance for himself by getting power over others. But that leads nowhere and only increases the unrest of the mind. According to the psychotherapist the right way to get peace is to give up the attempt to gain power over others and be content to serve them. That is the real way to power, not power over but power for; and then he said a very significant thing. He said, 'It does not feel like power, it feels like peace'. That reminds me of one of our Christian hymns. The hymn is a prayer for the gift of God's spirit. This is how the spirit of God is spoken of:

'Thou that art power and peace combined,
All highest strength, all purest love,
The rushing of the mighty wind,
The brooding of the gentle dove.'

It is power, but 'it does not feel like power; it feels like peace'—the peace of self-forgetfulness, the peace of Christ who, as He faced His sacrifice, could say, 'My peace I give unto you'.

Jesus promised His disciples peace on another occasion. That was after He had risen from the dead. He appeared in the most unexpected and mysterious way to his distraught and frightened disciples and said to them, 'Peace be unto you' (*John* 20: 21). His ordeal was over. He had been crucified, dead and buried, but not beaten, not defeated. Therefore He could promise them peace, the peace of security. He did not promise them personal safety. He gave them a greater thing than that, the certainty that all they valued most, all that was bound up with Him as a Living Person could not be destroyed. That certainty is the

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real security, the higher security, not the safety of the individual but the indestructibility of goodness. That is Christ's gift, the peace of Christ, dead but alive for evermore.

Let us pray

O God from whom all holy desires, all good counsels and all just works do proceed; give unto Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments, and also that by Thee we being delivered from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness.

'O GOD FROM WHOM ALL HOLY DESIRES DO PROCEED'—

That every thought of holiness is a gift of Thy spirit,
We gratefully confess.

That every virtue we possess comes from Thee,
We gratefully confess.

That every victory we win over fear and distrust is by Thy indwelling,
We gratefully confess.

'O GOD GIVE UNTO US THAT PEACE WHICH THE
WORLD CANNOT GIVE'—

Give us the peace that comes not by striving but by trusting.

Lord hear our prayer.

Give us Thy Holy Spirit that can make our lives purposeful and strong.

Lord hear our prayer.

Give us the power of Thy spirit that does not feel like power but feels like peace.

Lord hear our prayer.

'THAT OUR HEARTS MAY BE SET TO OBEY THY
COMMANDMENTS'—

Lord help us
to find our peace in the doing of Thy will.

Lord help us
to rest in the sovereignty of Thy power.

Lord help us
to commit ourselves to Thee in trustful obedience.

'THAT BY THEE WE BEING DELIVERED FROM FEAR'—
for freedom from anxiety and distress of mind,
We pray Thee.

for release from the sense of personal insecurity,
We pray Thee.

for the peace that comes from forgetting ourselves in
loyalty to Thy Kingdom,
We pray Thee.

O God, who art the author of peace, look in mercy
on the bitter strife and distress of men. Teach them
not to strive for peace but to take peace as a gift from
Thee. May they receive it into their hearts, that so,
secure in Thee, they may dwell at peace in a restless
world and spread abroad the blessed spirit of trust in
one another and in Thee.

And as Jesus knew so perfectly the secret of peace
let us meditate on His peace and share it with Him.

Jesus, at whose birth peace was promised,
after whose rising again from death the promise
was renewed,

Give us Thy peace.

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Jesus, sleeping peacefully in the midst of the storm,
facing unmoved the storm of hatred and hostility,

Give us Thy peace.

Jesus, possessing a peace so real because so heavenly,
manifesting peace beyond the power of the world
to disturb,

Give us Thy peace.

Jesus, who undismayed by defeat foretold the Resurrection; who in death was at peace trusting in the Father,

Give us Thy peace.

'Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.'

And remembering that peace is one of the gifts of God's Spirit let us pray that it may be ours by God's indwelling in us.

Blessèd Spirit of God, still with the tranquil inspiration of Thy grace our restless souls, and give us peace; may we have faith to wait patiently upon the will of God and tarry the leisure of the Lord, that He may comfort our hearts and stablish us in His strength through the might of Thy holy indwelling.

May the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God. AMEN.

LOVE

Love has been called 'the greatest thing in the world'. Certainly it is our greatest duty. Every duty would be fulfilled if this supreme duty could be observed. St. Paul said that 'love is the fulfilling of the law' (*Romans* 13: 10). Many separate duties go to the making of the one all-inclusive law of God. But they will all be fulfilled by anyone who has this gift of love. Because one speaks of it so naturally as a gift, it is obviously far more than a duty. A duty is what we are expected to perform, because it is in our power to do so, but a gift is what we cannot have unless someone gives it to us. So it would be better to speak of love as our greatest good. What I mean by that is that it is the greatest of all blessings to live in love. We were made for love, we need nothing so much, we lack what is vital to us if we have not got it, and nothing helps us to make so much of life as love. That is what all the psychologists tell us. Something or someone to love—that is the secret of life. In all of us there is a fund of emotional force. Its release and attachment to what is worthy of it is the one thing needful. As one of the great psychologists I have referred to said, 'mental health lies in the mind lighted with love for one's fellows'. Thus there is no joy and peace without love. That is why it can be called our greatest good. It is the source of so much that is precious to us. When we are possessed by it our nature finds its deepest satisfaction.

That was wonderfully brought out in a short story called *Master and Man* by the great Russian writer Tolstoy. It is about a man who lived for gain and profit. He was self-centred and harsh. One day

during the Russian winter he set out on an errand of business. He was accompanied in his carriage by a simple-minded servant. On this journey a terrible snow-storm came on. They lost their way, and finally the carriage stuck fast in the deep snow. The cold was intense, and they ran the risk of death by exposure during the long winter night. To begin with the master was simply annoyed that his journey had been interrupted. Later he became alarmed for his safety. Then he tried to make his way to some peasant's house. But he could not find any place of refuge. When he got back he found his servant dying of cold. Suddenly a great pity took possession of him for the simple uncomplaining man. He determined to save him if he could. He opened his fur coat and folded him in his arms, so that the heat of his body might pass into the servant. Then he fell asleep. When he awoke he found the man still alive and said to himself in delight, 'He is alive, and therefore so also am I'. Then he compared his former acquisitive selfish life with the wonderful new experience he was going through. Speaking of himself as he had been, he said, 'That man can never have known what is the greatest thing of all. He can never have known what I know. Yes, I know it for certain now. At last—I know'. 'The greatest thing of all' is to love sacrificially another human being. That is the knowledge of God. As the Bible says, 'everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God, for God is love' (1 John 4: 7, 8).

But perhaps there is an even more wonderful experience than the one described so beautifully in that story. It is true that love came to the man as a great gift, suddenly and mysteriously. It did not come by any effort of his will. It could not come in that way. It

just took possession of him when he least expected it, and it transformed him. It was a gift of God's spirit, a wonderful experience. Yet there is a more profound and moving experience even than that. It is learning to love by being loved. Man should be a lover, it is his greatest good to be a lover; but to be a lover he must be beloved. It is a great thing to be loved by another person. But there is something more fundamental than that. Our ultimate need is to be beloved by God. The love that is best worth having, the purest deepest love is awakened in us when we are sure that God loves us. 'It cannot be got by striving.' Such love is the gift of God. It is the most excellent of all gifts, because it is most obviously a gift. With the gift of the divine love all other gifts that are worth having are given us. Certainly we have joy; for love makes us happier than anything else, and 'holy heavenly love' makes us happiest of all. We have peace too. To be loved is peace and to be loved by God is perfect peace; for perfect love, which is God's love, casteth out fear which is the enemy of peace. We only know what love really is when we know the love of God.

The Bible has an unrivalled way of putting the deepest truths in the simplest words. It puts this great truth perfectly in these words, 'We love, because He first loved us' (1 *John* 4: 19). These words lay all the emphasis on our being loved by God. The heart of the Christian Gospel is expressed in them. It is that God loved us before we loved Him, and that His love for everyone was perfectly manifested in Jesus Christ. It is His love for us that reveals to us how wonderful love can be. In his poem the *Testament of Beauty* Robert Bridges puts this truth in the following rather difficult but very striking words:

'In the fellowship of the friendship of Christ
God is seen as the very self-essence of love,
Creator and mover of all as active Lover of all,
Self-expressed in no-self, without which no self were.'

'God is seen as active Lover of all.' What an impressive picture of God's in-most nature, 'the active Lover of all' giving of Himself to the world that He might awaken love in the heart of man. But perhaps the love of God is best expressed in simple words that a child could understand:

'Love in loving finds employ,
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be
Loving Him who first loved me.'

The whole wonderful truth is told us in these other words of the Bible: 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us' (*Romans* 5: 5). The personal knowledge of God's infinite love is supremely worth having. It is 'not to be got by striving'; it is a gift of God's spirit in man's inmost heart.

Let us pray

O God who hast taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send Thy Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee.

Let us meditate on this beautiful prayer

'ALL OUR DOINGS WITHOUT LOVE ARE NOTHING WORTH'

All our righteousness, if it be without love,
Profiteth nothing.

All our zeal in doing good, if it be without love,
Profiteth nothing.

All our speech and thought about Thee, O God, if
they be without love,
Profiteth nothing.

‘SEND THY HOLY SPIRIT AND POUR INTO OUR HEARTS
THAT MOST EXCELLENT GIFT OF LOVE’

We cannot get it by striving for it.
Pour it into our hearts.

It is Thy gift to us, O God.
Pour it into our hearts.

We never can have too much of it.
Pour it into our hearts.

‘LOVE THE VERY BOND OF PEACE AND OF ALL VIRTUES’

With this gift we possess all gifts.
Lord, give it us.

Love binds together all virtues into one.
Lord, give it us.

Love is the crown of all goodness.
Lord, give it us.

Let us make our own this prayer of Rabindranath
Tagore for the gift of love—

‘Send me the love which is cool and pure, like Your
rain that blesses the thirsty earth and fills the homely
earthen jars.

Send me the love that would soak down into the
centre of being, and from there would spread like the
unseen sap through the branching tree of life, giving
birth to fruits and flowers.

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'Send me the love that keeps the heart still with the fulness of peace.'

By pity for the sufferings of others,
by our need of others' love,
by love's power to heal our souls,
by the release of spirit it gives us,
by the love of Thee shed abroad in our hearts,
by Thy love of us ere ever we loved Thee
May love be awakened in our hearts.

And as Jesus is the Lord of love, as it is His to give;
let us meditate on Him and His love—

Jesus, lover of all the world,
 'lover of my soul,'
Jesus, moved by all love's raptures,
 bearing all love's burdens,
Jesus, hating sin and all the power of it,
 loving all in bondage to it,
Jesus, the victim of hatred,
 'unwearied in forgiveness still,'
Jesus, Thy life of perfect love
 crowned by Thy death of utter sacrifice,
Jesus, Thy Cross, 'the measure and the pledge of love,'
O give us hearts to love like Thee.

O God of love, who hast given us a new commandment, that we should love one another even as Thou didst love us, keep us in the blessed assurance that Thou dost love us, and ever renew in us our love to Thee and to all men by the remembrance that Thou hast first loved us.

And unto the God of love be all glory and praise both now and for ever. AMEN.